Virtues of salaah

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيم
نَحْمَدُهُ وَ نُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْم وَ آلِهِ وَ صَحْبِهِ وَ أتْبَاعِهِ الْحُمَاةِ الدِّيْنِ الْقوِيْم

أَمَّا بَعْدُ

All praise belongs to Allaah and may His choicest mercies be showered upon His honoured Rasool ρ, his family, his companions and those who follow him in upholding the cause of the upright Deen.

The indifference shown towards practising the Deen these days is so evident that people are even negligent of the salaah, which is the most important pillar of Islaam after Imaan and the first of all acts to be reckoned for on the Day of Qiyaamah. Worse than this is the fact that no call is heard to turn people towards the Deen. However, experience has brought it to my mind that an effort needs to be made to bring the words of Rasulullaah ρ to the attention of people even though the task is an arduous one because of my incompetence. Nevertheless, people with open minds who are not opposed to the Deen will Inshaa Allaah be touched by these words and will benefit from them through the blessing of the personality who spoke them.

Some friends have great hope that this will be successful and have therefore in insisted on it. I have therefore merely translated some Ahadeeth concerning salaah. I have compiled a book on the virtues of Tabligh and this will be the second in the Tabligh series, which I have titled The Virtues of salaah.

The inspiration is only from Allaah! In Him I trust and to Him do I turn.

With regard to salaah, Muslims today can be divided into three groups. There are those who are totally unmindful of salaah. Then there are those who although perform their salaah, are not particular about performing their salaah in Jamaa'ah. The third group are those who are regular in their salaah with Jamaa'ah as well, but do not perform the salaah properly. With this in mind, I have divided the book into three

chapters to suit each group. Each chapter contains the Ahadeeth of Rasulullaah ρ, but the translations have been simplified and are not literal. Since those dedicated to propagating salaah are largely men of knowledge, I have stated the references as well as any associated comments in Arabic. This has not been translated since they will not be of any benefit to the common man.

Part One

The Importance of salaah

This chapter has two parts, the first discussing the virtues of salaah and the second discussing the warnings and punishments for those who neglect salaah.

Chapter One

The Virtues of salaah

Hadith 1

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Islaam is founded on five pillars; testifying that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad ρ is the servant and messenger of Allaah, establishment of salaah, paying of zakaah, performing Hajj and fasting in Ramadhaan."

NOTE: These are the fundamental of Islaam that Rasulullaah ρ has compared to a tent resting on five supports. The Kalimah is the central support and the other four supports are at each corner of the tent. The tent can obviously not stand without the central support and if any one of the other supports are missing, the tent will collapse in that corner. In the light of this Hadith, let us judge for ourselves how far we have kept up the tent of Islaam. Is there really any pillar that we have properly cared for?

The five pillars of Islaam mentioned here are so essential that they have been classified as the supports of Islaam and a Muslim needs to give importance to all of them to be called a Muslim. The most important of them after Imaan is salaah. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that he once enquired from Rasulullaah ρ about which act was the dearest to Allaah. Rasulullaah ρ replied that it was salaah.

When he then asked which came next in order of merit, Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Kind treatment towards one's parents." When he again asked what was next, Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Jihaad."

Mulla Ali Qaari رحمه الله has quoted this Hadith in support of the belief that salaah is the most important religious duty after Imaan. This is further corroborated by a Hadith in which Rasulullaah ρ said, "salaah is the best of all that has been ordained by Allaah."

It has appeared explicitly in many authentic Ahadeeth that salaah is the most important and the best of all good deeds. Jaami'us Sagheer quotes such narrations from five Sahabah ψ. They are Hadhrat Thowbaan τ, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ, Hadhrat Salama τ, Hadhrat Abu Umaamah τ and Hadhrat Ubaadah τ. A Hadith from Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ and Hadhrat Anas τ states that salaah in its time is the best of all deeds. Narrations from Hadhrat Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ and Hadhrat Ummu Farwa رضي الله عنهما state that the best of deeds is salaah performed at the first permissible time. All these narrations convey the same message.

Hadith 2

Hadhrat Abu Dharr τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ once came out of his house during the winter months when the leaves were falling off their trees. As he caught hold of a branch of a tree, its leaves started to fall down in even greater numbers. "O Abu Dharr!" Rasulullaah ρ called out. "At your service, O Rasulullaah ρ!" Hadhrat Abu Dharr τ responded. Rasulullaah ρ then said to him, "When a Muslim perform his salaah to please Allaah, his sins fall away from him just as these leaves are falling off this tree."

NOTE: The leaves of trees usually fall in large numbers during the cold months to the extent that some trees are left completely bare. Such is the effect of salaah performed with sincerity. It causes all the sins of the person to be wiped off. It should, however, be remembered that according to the research of the Ulema, it is only the minor sins (*Saghaa'ir*) that are forgiven through salaah and other acts of worship. Major sins (*Kabaa'ir*)) are forgive only through sincere repentance (*Towbah*). We should therefore be particular about coupling *Towbah Istikhfaar* (seeking forgiveness) with our salaah. It is, however, a different matter if through His grace Allaah chooses to pardon even the major sins through salaah.

Hadith 3

Hadhrat Abu Uthmaan τ says, "I was with Hadhrat Salmaan τ beneath a tree when Hadhrat Salmaan τ caught hold of a dry branch and shook it until its leaves fell off. He then said to me, 'O, Abu Uthmaan! Will you not ask me why I am doing this?' 'Do tell me,' I said. He then explained, 'Rasulullaah ρ had done exactly like this before me when I was with him beneath a tree. He caught a dry branch and shook it until all its leaves fell off. He then said, 'O Salmaan! Will you not ask me why I have done this?' When I asked the reason, he explained, 'Verily when a Muslim performs wudhu properly and then performs his salaah five times a day, all his sins fall away from him just as these leaves have fallen off.' Rasulullaah ρ then recited the verse of the Qur'aan, which states, "**Establish salaah at the two ends of the day** *(with Fajr salaah and Zuhr salaah at the one end and Asr salaah and Maghrib salaah at the other)* **and during portions of the night** *(the Isha salaah)*. **Verily good deeds** *(such as the five Fardh salaah)* **wipe out evil acts. This is advice to those who will take heed.**[1]."

NOTE: The behaviour of Hadhrat Salmaan τ in this Hadith displays the tremendous love that the Sahabah ψ had for Rasulullaah ρ. They would often reminisce about the time when Rasulullaah ρ was with them and, while quoting him, do exactly what they had seen him doing. It is really very difficult to discuss all the Ahadeeth of Rasulullaah ρconcerning the importance of salaah and which declare forgiveness for those who guard it. As stated above, the Ulema have restricted this declaration of forgiveness to the minor sins only. However, the text of the Hadith mentions no such restriction.

My learned father gave me two reasons for this. It does not behove a Muslim to commit any of the major sins. In the first place, it is extremely difficult for him to commit them and should he commit any by chance, he cannot rest in peace until he washes them away with his tears of repentance. He is, however, prone to overlook certain minor sins he commits, which therefore remain to be accounted for. These are then forgiven through salaah. Secondly, the person who performs his salaah with sincerity and taking heed of all the requisites and etiquettes is very likely to repent a great number of times daily. In fact, in the closing prayer of salaah, he says, "O Allaah! I have wronged my soul a great wrong and none forgives sins besides You. So do forgive me and have mercy on me. Indeed, You are the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful."

[1] Surah Hood, verse 114.

When the above Hadith speaks of performing wudhu properly, it refers to observing all the etiquettes and *Mustahabbaat* (optional practices) of the wudhu. For example, people are generally negligent of the Sunnah of using the Miswaak about which a Hadith states that salaah performed after using the Miswaak is seventy times superior to the salaah that is not preceded by use of the Miswaak. Another Hadith emphasises that the Miswaak be used because it has the following 10 benefits:

1. It cleanses the mouth
2. It is a cause of Allaah's pleasure
3. It infuriates Shaytaan
4. Allaah loves the person who uses the Miswaak
5. The angels also love him
6. It strengthens the gums
7. It purges phlegm
8. It lends fragrance to the mouth
9. It purges bile
10. It improves the eye-sight

Most importantly, however, is that it is a Sunnah of Rasulullaah ρ.

Ulema have stated that there are as many as seventy virtues of the Miswaak, one of them being that a person in the habit of using the Miswaak dies with the Kalimah on his lips. On the contrary, they have enumerated seventy harms of using (intoxicants such as) Opium, one of these being the fact that the person using them will be deprived of reciting the Kalimah when he dies.

The rewards of performing wudhu properly are numerous. A Hadith states that the parts of body washed in wudhu shall shine on the Day of Qiyaamah. It is by this sign that Rasulullaah ρ will immediately recognise his followers.

Hadith 4.1

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once asked the Sahabah ψ, "Do you think that any dirt can remain on a person bathing five times a day in a stream running in front of his door?" "No," they replied, "No dirt can remain on his body." Rasulullaah ρ then continued, "This is precisely the effect of salaah offered five times a day. With the Grace of Allaah, it washes away all the sins."

Hadith 4.2

Hadhrat Jaabir τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The likeness of five times daily salaah is like a deep stream running in front of the door of a person who bathes therein five times a day."

NOTE: Running water is generally free from dirt and the deeper it runs, the cleaner and purer it is. The Hadith speaks about such deep running water because the cleaner the water is, the cleaner will a person be when bathing in it. Salaah performed with due regard for its etiquettes purifies the soul of all sins.

There are several Ahadeeth narrated by different Sahabah ψ conveying the same meaning, albeit with slight variations in text. Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Each of the five salaahs expiates for the sins committed since the preceding salaah." The example is of a person working in a factory where his body gets covered with dust and, upon returning home, he baths in each of five streams running water in between the factory and his house. The effect of five times daily salaah is quite similar. Any sins committed between two salaahs are forgiven on account of the forgiveness sought in each salaah.

By citing such examples, Rasulullaah ρ intended to impress upon the mind that salaah is extremely effective in removing sins. He has cited several examples because examples are best remembered and effective in conveying the message. If we fail to avail of Allaah's mercy, only we will be the losers. We are prone to commit innumerable sins and other acts of disobedience, thereby deserving Allaah's wrath and punishment. However, how Merciful is our Allaah that He has created a means of expiation for us. His mercy and forgiveness actually seem to be searching for avenues to manifest themselves. It is a great pity if we do not avail of this great favour. A Hadith states that if a person goes to bed with the intention of getting up for Tahajjud and does not wake up, he receives the full reward for the Tahajjud salaah even though he had been enjoying his sleep at the time. How tremendous is the benevolence of Allaah? What a great deprivation will it be if we fail to receive blessings from such a Giver?

Hadith 5

Hadhrat Hudhayfah τ reports that whenever Rasulullaah ρ faced any difficulty, he would immediately resort to salaah.

NOTE: Salaah is a great mercy from Allaah and resorting to salaah during times of difficulty entails hastening towards Allaah's mercy. When Allaah's mercy then responds to the difficulty, there can remain nothing of the difficulty. There are many Ahadeeth conveying the same message and this was precisely what the Sahabah ψ also did, since they followed Rasulullaah ρ in the finest detail.

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ reports that whenever the wind blew strongly, Rasulullaah ρ would immediately enter the Masjid and would not leave until the wind had subsided. Similarly, when a solar or lunar eclipse occurred, Rasulullaah ρ would start performing salaah. Rasulullaah ρ informed Hadhrat Suhayb τ that this was the practice of all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام to resort to salaah whenever they faced any difficulty.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ was once on a journey when he got the news of the death of his son. He alighted from his camel and performed two Rakaahs of salaah. Thereafter, he recited "*Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon*" and said, "I have done what Allaah has ordered us to do in His Lofty Book when He says, "**Seek assistance with sabr and salaah. Without doubt, this is difficult, except for the humble ones** *(those who fear Allaah)*"[1]. Another similar story is narrated about the time when he was on a journey and received the news about the death of his brother Quthum. He went to the side of the road, alighted the camel and performed two Rakaahs of salaah, making du'aa in *Tashahhud* for a long time. After finishing his salaah, he got back on his camel and recited the verse of the Qur'aan, "**Seek assistance with sabr and salaah. Without doubt, this is difficult, except for the humble ones** *(those who fear Allaah)*".

Yet another story about him states that upon hearing about the demise of one of the wives of Rasulullaah ρ, he fell down prostrate. When somebody asked him the reason he said, "Rasulullaah ρ had enjoined on us to prostrate whenever a calamity befalls us. What calamity can be greater than the death of the Ummul Mu'mineen?"

When Hadhrat Ubaadah τ was about to breath his last, he addressed the people around him saying, "I forbid all of you from crying over me. When my soul departs, I want you all to perform wudhu with all its etiquettes and to then proceed to the Masjid to pray for my forgiveness. This is because Allaah has instructed us saying, "**Seek assistance with sabr and salaah. Without doubt, this is difficult, except for the humble ones** *(those who fear Allaah)*". You may then lay me to rest in my grave."

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[1] Surah Baqarah, verse 45.

When Hadhrat Abdur Rahmaan τ fell so seriously ill that people became convinced that he would pass away, his wife Hadhrat Ummu Kulthoom رضي الله عنهما started to perform salaah. When she had completed her salaah, he regained consciousness, much to the surprise of the people. "Did I appear to be in the throes of death?" he asked the people. "Most certainly," they replied. He then related to them that two angels had come to him and said, "You now have to come with us to the One Who decides best (Allaah) so that a decision can be made about you." They were then taking him away with them when another angel appeared and stopped them saying, "You two may go away from here because he was recorded from amongst the fortunate ones from the time he had been in his mother's womb. His children still need to benefit from him a while longer." He then lived on for another month before he passed away.[1]

Hadhrat Nadhar رحمه الله narrates that it once became very dark during the daytime. He hurried to Hadhrat Anas τ to find out if he had ever experienced similar conditions during the lifetime of Rasulullaah ρ. Hadhrat Anas τ said, "Allaah forbid! Whenever the wind blew strongly during those days, we would all hurry to the Masjid lest it should be the approach of the Day of Qiyaamah."

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Salaam τ narrates that whenever the members of Rasulullaah ρ's family suffered any hardship, he would entreat them to perform salaah, as he recited the verse, "**Instruct** *(encourage)* **your family to perform salaah and** *(you)* **yourself** *(must)* **remain steadfast on it. We do not ask provision** *(sustenance)* **from you, but We provide for you** *(your duty is to perform your salaah and not to forsake it in search of sustenance because We shall provide that for you)*. **The best** *(most excellent)* **result** *(reward in the Aakhirah)* **is for** *(adopting)* **Taqwa".**

A Hadith states that when a person is confronted with a need, whether pertaining to this life or the Aakhiraat (Hereafter), whether it concerns Allaah or any person, he should perform a perfect wudhu, perform two Rakaahs salaah, glorify Allaah, confer Durood upon Rasulullaah ρ and then recite the following du'aa:

PUT ARABIC

TRANSLATION: There is none worthy of worship but Allaah The Clement and The Bountiful. Glorified is Allaah, the Rabb of the tremendous

[1] *Durrul Manthoor.*

throne. Praise be to Allaah, the Rabb of the worlds. I ask You for all that leads to Your Mercy and that is deserving of Your forgiveness. I ask You for abundance in all that is good and refuge from all that is evil. Leave no sin with me without You pardoning it, no distress without You removing it and no need without You fulfilling it. O The Most Merciful of those who show mercy!

Hadhrat Wahab bin Munabbih رحمه الله writes, "Have your needs fulfilled by Allaah through salaah. If a calamity befell the people of the past, they would hasten towards salaah. There was a porter in Kufa who was so well known for his honesty that people entrusted their valuables and money with him to transport from one place to another. He was once on his usual errand when a person met him on the way and asked him about his destination. When the porter informed him where he was headed, the man said, "I am also headed for the same place. If I could walk, I would have accompanied you on foot, but will you kindly give me a lift on your mule in exchange for one Dinaar?" The porter agreed and allowed him to share the mule with him. When the road forked at a certain point on the way, the person said, "Which road will you take?" "The highway, of course," the porter replied. The person said, "We should rather go by the other road because it is shorter and there is plenty of grass along the way to feed the animal." "But I have never been this way before," the porter protested. "But I have travelled by this route often," the person said. The porter believed him and steered the animal on that path.

After some distance, the path ended in a frightening forest where a large number of dead bodies were lying about. The person suddenly jumped off the mule and took out his knife to kill the porter. "Hold on!" the porter shouted. "You may take the animal and its load, but do not kill me!" The person refused and swore that he would first kill the porter and then take the animal and the goods. When he realised that the fiend would not listen, the porter pleased, Alright, then first permit me to perform two Rakaahs salaah." The person agreed and scoffed, "You may go ahead. All these people also made the same request, their salaah was of no avail to them."

The porter started his salaah, but could not recollect any Surah to join to Surah Faatiha. In the meantime, the villain pressed him hard to hurry up with the salaah. Suddenly, the following verse flashed to his mind:

PUT ARABIC

Or *(is)* **He** *(better)* **Who responds to the distressed** *(helpless)* **person when he calls Him** *(for help)*, **Who averts evil** *(from people)* **and Who has made you** *(His)* **deputies** *(to enforce His commands)* **on earth** *(better than the gods of Mushrikeen)* **? Is there another Ilaah** *(who deserves to be worshipped)* **with Allaah?** *(However, despite the advice that comes to you Mushrikeen,)* **Little do you take heed.**[1]

The porter was reciting the verse with tears filling his eyes when a horseman suddenly appeared on the scene. He was wearing a sparkling helmet and held a spear in his hand. He pierced the body of the scoundrel with his spear, killing him instantly. A flame then rose from the spot where the dead body fell. The porter fell down prostrate and thanked Allaah. He then ran behind the horseman and asked him who he was. The man replied, "I am the slave of Him who answers the distressed one. You are now safe to go." The horseman rode away and disappeared.

Indeed salaah is a great boon that not only pleases Allaah, but often secures us relief from the calamities of this life and also provides us with peace of mind. Allaama Ibn Seereen رحمه الله writes, "If I am allowed to choose between Jannah and two Rakaahs salaah, I would prefer salaah because while Jannah is for my own pleasure, salaah is for the pleasure of my Allaah." Rasulullaah ρ said, "That Muslim is worthy of envy who is not light (not overly burdened with domestic expends), whose has a large share of salaah, who remains content with only the necessary portion of sustenance throughout his life, who worships Allaah well, who lives a life of an unknown person, who then dies early without leaving much behind and very few to mourn him."

Another Hadith states, "Perform salaah frequently at your homes so that the good in them may be multiplied."

Hadith 6

Hadhrat Abu Muslim Taghlabi رحمه الله narrates that he once went to see Hadhrat Abu Umaamah τ in Masjid and asked him if he had really heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "When a person performs wudhu properly and then performs his Fardh salaah, Allaah forgives him all the sins committed that day by his feet in going towards evil, by his hands in doing evil, by his ears in listening to evil, by his eyes in looking at evil and by his heart in thinking of evil." Hadhrat Abu Umaamah τ replied, "By Allaah, I have heard these words from Rasulullaah ρ several times."

[1] Surah Naml, verse 62.

NOTE: Many of the companions have narrated this Hadith with slight variations. Amongst these are Hadhrat Uthmaan τ, Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ, Hadhrat Anas τ, Hadhrat Abdullaah Sanaabihi τ and Hadhrat Amr bin Abasah τ. Those endowed with the power of *Kashf* can even witness the sins being shed. It is said that Imaam Abu Haneefah رحمه الله could tell from the water falling down from the limbs of the person performing wudhu which sins were being washed off. In a narration from Hadhrat Uthmaan τ, Rasulullaah ρ is reported to have warned against being deceived by this forgiveness. This means that a person should never commit sins in the hope that they will be forgiven through salaah. We will be lucky if Allaah even accepts the acts of worship we carry out. While salaah has the capacity to expiate for the sins committed, only Allaah knows whether our salaah is of the required calibre. Furthermore, sinning in the belief that our Merciful Allaah will forgive us shows extreme audaciousness and is just like children purposely disobeying their father's instruction on the grounds that he will forgive them for it.

Hadith 7

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ narrates that two persons of one tribe came to Rasulullaah ρ and embraced Islaam at the same time. While one of them was martyred in a battle, the other passed away a year later. Hadhrat Talha bin Ubaydullah τ saw a dream in which the person who had passed away later was admitted into Jannah before the martyr. This surprised him. When this dream was related to Rasulullaah ρ, he explained, "Has the person dying later not fasted for one additional month of Ramadhaan and has he not performed over six thousand Rakaahs of salaah more during the year?"

NOTE: If we add up only the Fardh and Witr salaahs for each of the 29 days of every month of the year, the sum equals 6960 Rakaahs. As for the months of 30 days, a further 20 Rakaahs may be added. If even the Sunnah and Nawaafil are added, the number multiplies so much more.

A narration in Ibn Maajah reports the incident in more detail. In this narration, Hadhrat Talha τ himself speaks about the two men of one tribe who accepted Islaam at the same time. The one possessed great fervour and was soon martyred in battle, while the other passed away a year later. Recounting his actual dream, Hadhrat Talha says, "I saw myself standing at the gate of Jannah with the two of them. Someone came out from Jannah and permitted in the one who had passed away

a year later, while the other waited outside. He then returned and permitted the other one in as well. He then addressed me saying that I still had time and should leave."

When Hadhrat Talha τ related the dream to the people the following morning, they were all surprised and remarked that the martyr ought to have entered first. When Rasulullaah ρ heard about this, he asked, "What is there to be surprised about?" "O Rasulullaah ρ!" the Sahabah ψ exclaimed, "He was martyred and always had more fervour and courage, yet the other man entered Jannah first!" Rasulullaah ρ asked, "Did he not worship Allaah for an extra year?" When the Sahabah ψ confirmed that he did, Rasulullaah ρ asked further, "Did he not then fast for an extra month of Ramadhaan?" When they again concurred, Rasulullaah ρ asked, "Did he not make so many more Sajdahs during the remaining year?" "Certainly," they agreed. "Then," Rasulullaah ρ explained, "there is a tremendous difference between the two."

Such incidents have been reported about several Sahabah ψ. A narration from Abu Dawood mentions an incident in which the one person passed away only a week later, but was still admitted earlier into Jannah. The reality is that we do not know how valuable salaah is. It is for this reason that Rasulullaah ρ often said that the comfort of his eyes lay in salaah. The fact that Rasulullaah ρ loved salaah so much makes it evident that salaah is no ordinary matter.

Another narration speaks of two brothers who passed away within 40 days of each other. Because the one who passed away first was more pious than the other, the people spoke more highly of him. "Was the other brother not a Muslim?" Rasulullaah ρ asked them. "He certainly was, but not one of a high calibre," the Sahabah ψ replied. To this, Rasulullaah ρ remarked, "How do you know to what heights the forty extra days of salaah made him reach? The example of salaah is like a deep stream running by the door in which a person bathes five times a day. What dirt can remain on his body? How do you know to what heights the extra days of salaah made him reach?"[1]

Hadith 8

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "When the time for salaah approaches, an angel is deputed to announce, "O Children of Aadam! Rise and extinguish the fire that you

[1] Maalik, Ahmad, Nasa'ee and Ibn Khuzaymah.

have kindled to burn yourselves (by committing sins). The people then rise up, perform wudhu and perform their Zuhr salaah, which secures forgiveness of the sins they had committed since daybreak. The same is repeated at the time of Asr, Maghrib and Isha. While people generally go to bed after Isha, there are those who engage in good deeds, while others engage in sin."

NOTE: Many Ahadeeth discuss this subject. Through His benevolence, Allaah forgives people for their sins though salaah because repentance is found within the salaah itself (as has been discussed under Hadith 3). As a result, both minor and major sins are forgiven on condition that a person sincerely regrets his sins. Allaah says, "**Establish salaah at the two ends of the day** *(with Fajr salaah and Zuhr salaah at the one end and Asr salaah and Maghrib salaah at the other)* **and during portions of the night** *(the Isha salaah)*. **Verily good deeds** *(such as the five Fardh salaah)* **wipe out evil acts. This is advice to those who will take heed.**[1]".

The renowned Sahabi Hadhrat Salmaan τ says, "People get divided into three groups after Isha. There are those for whom the night is a blessing and a source of gain. They are those who spend the night in the worship of Allaah, while others are asleep. The night brings great reward for them from Allaah. On the other hand, there are others who turn their night into a calamity and punishment for themselves. These are the people who exploit the solitude of the night to indulge in various sins. The night is truly a misfortune for them. Then there is the third group of people who go to bed immediately after Isha. They neither gain nor lose."

Hadith 9

Hadhrat Abu Qatadah bin Rabi τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "Allaah has said, 'O, Muhammad! I have ordained five daily salaahs for your followers and have made a pledge with Myself that whosoever is regular in performing his salaah at its fixed time shall be admitted into Jannah. Those followers who do not guard their salaah are not included in this pledge.'"

NOTE: Another Hadith states that Allaah has ordained the five salaahs and whosoever is mindful of his salaah, performs wudhu properly and performs them at their prescribed hours with sincerity and devotion, Allaah will surely admit him into Jannah. There is, however no such

[1] Surah Hood, verse 114.

assurance for the one who does not guard his salaah. He may either be forgiven or not forgiven."
Salaah holds such tremendous value that guarding it secures a pledge and guarantee of Jannah from Allaah Himself. When person with some position or wealth grant us assurance of something or stands surety for anything, we are content with their word and we also feel forever obliged to him. Here Allaah Who is the Absolute Sovereign of both worlds is giving us surety in exchange for an act of worship that does not involve much effort. However, we still find ourselves negligent of this. What a loss and misfortune on our part!

Hadith 10

Hadhrat Ibn Salmaan رحمه الله says that he was informed by one of the Sahabah ψ that after they had won the battle of Khaybar, they began to trade their booty amongst themselves. One of them went up to Rasulullaah ρ and said, "O Rasulullaah ρ! No one has earned as much profit as I have earned in today's trade." When Rasulullaah ρ asked him how much he earned, he replied, "I continued trading until I earned a profit of three hundred *Uqiyyah* of silver." To this, Rasulullaah ρ said, "Should I inform you of something better than this?" "Please do, O Rasulullaah ρ!" the Sahabi τ exclaimed. Rasulullaah ρ then said, "Two Rakaahs of Nafl salaah after the Fardh salaah."

NOTE: Three hundred *Uqiyyah* of silver amounts to approximately three thousand Rupees. Rasulullaah ρ makes it clear that the perishable gain of this world cannot compare with the everlasting gain of the Aakhirah. We will truly enjoy the beauty of life when our Imaan becomes such two Rakaahs of salaah is more valuable to us than three thousand Rupees.

Salaah really is such a great treasure. This is why Rasulullaah ρ has referred to it as the coolness of his eyes and had emphasised it right to his last breath. Hadhrat Ummu Salamah رضي الله عنها had reported that the last words that Rasulullaah ρ spoke, which he could hardly say, concerned guarding salaah and treating slaves kindly. There is a similar Hadith narrated by Hadhrat Ali τ stating that Rasulullaah ρ once dispatched an expedition to Najd. When they returned with plenty of booty, Rasulullaah ρ noticed some people looking at them with envy because their brief expedition had yielded such tremendous booty. Rasulullaah ρ therefore said to them, "Shall I inform you of a group of people who earn much more in a much shorter time? They are, those

who perform their Fajr in Jamaa'ah and continue sitting afterwards until a while after sunrise when they proceed to perform two Rakaahs of (*Ishraaq*) salaah. Such people will also be gaining tremendous fortunes in a very short while."

The famous luminary Hadhrat Shaqeeq Balkhi رحمه الله had stated that they had sought after five things and had found that these could be acquired through five avenues:

1. An increase in sustenance can be attained through the *Chaast* (*Duha*) salaah
2. Light in the grave can be attained through the Tahajjud salaah
3. An answer to the questions of Munkar and Nakeer can be attained through recitation of the Qur'aan
4. An easy crossing of the bridge of Siraat can be attained through fasting and Sadaqah
5. Shade beneath Allaah's Throne on the Day of Qiyaamah can be attained through seclusion

There are so many Ahadeeth emphasising the importance of salaah and enumerating its virtues that it is very difficult to cover all of them in this book. A few have been mentioned here to acquire the blessings they contain.

Rasulullaah ρ said:

1. Salaah was the first injunction ordained by Allaah and shall also be the first to be reckoned for on the Day of Qiyaamah
2. Fear Allaah in the matter of salaah! Fear Allaah in the matter of salaah! Fear Allaah in the matter of salaah!
3. Salaah distinguishes a person from Shirk
4. Salaah is a hallmark of Islaam. The person who performs his salaah at the fixed hours with a devoted heart and with all its Mustahabbaat is surely a Mu'min
5. Allaah has not ordained anything better than Imaan and salaah. Had there been anything better, Allaah would have ordained it for His angels. However, all day and night, there are some who are always in Ruku and others always in Sajdah
6. Salaah is the pillar of Islaam
7. Salaah humiliates Shaytaan
8. Salaah is the light of a Mu'min
9. Salaah is the best Jihaad

10. Allaah focuses His attention towards a person when he begins his salaah and turns it away only when the person turns away from his salaah
11. When a calamity strikes, people frequenting the Masjid are saved
12. If some major sins of a Muslim take him to Jahannam, the fire would not burn those parts of his body which have touched the ground while he was in Sajdah during salaah
13. The fire of Jahannam has been forbidden to touch those parts of the body which touch the ground while performing Sajdah
14. Salaah made at the prescribed hours is more beloved to Allaah than all other acts of devotion
15. Allaah likes most the posture of a person when he is in Sajdah, rubbing his forehead on the ground in humility
16. A person in Sajdah is nearest to Allaah
17. Salaah is key to Jannah
18. When a person stands in salaah the gates of Jannah are thrown open and all the veils between him and Allaah are lifted (provided that he does not spoil his salaah by unnecessary coughing, etc)
19. A person in salaah is knocking at the door of Allaah and this door is always opened for the one who knocks
20. The position of salaah in Islaam is like the position of the head in a body
21. salaah is the light of heart. Those who wish, may illuminate their hearts through salaah
22. If a person wishes to have his sins forgiven by Allaah, he should perform the wudhu properly, perform two or four Rakaahs of Fardh or Nafl salaah and then pray to Allaah
23. Any piece of ground on which Allaah is remembered in salaah takes pride over the rest of the Earth
24. Allaah accepts the prayer of a person who makes du'aa after performing two Rakaahs of salaah. Allaah then grants him what he asks either immediately or later (if this is best for him)
25. When a person performs two Rakaahs of salaah in solitude where only Allaah and His angels see him, he receives a certificate of deliverance from Jahannam
26. When a person performs a Fardh salaah, Allaah will grant him one of his du'aas
27. When a person performs the five daily salaahs devoutly with proper wudhu, Ruku, Sajdah, etc, Jannah becomes due to him and Jahannam is forbidden for him

28. Shaytaan remains scared of a Muslim when he is particular about his five daily salaahs, but as soon as he becomes negligent of them, Shaytaan gets bold and is hopeful of deviating him
29. Salaah at its earliest time is the best of all acts
30. Salaah is the devotional offering of the pious
31. Salaah at its earliest time is the most beloved deed to Allaah
32. At dawn, some people go to the Masjid and others to the marketplace. Those going to the Masjid are the flag-bearers of Imaan, while those leaving for the marketplace are the flag-bearers of Shaytaan
33. The four Rakaahs offered before Zuhr have the same reward as four Rakaahs of Tahajjud
34. The four Rakaahs before Zuhr are regarded as equal to the four Rakaahs of Tahajjud
35. Allaah's mercy is focussed towards a person standing in salaah
36. Salaah performed during dead of night is the best of deeds, but there are very few who do it
37. Hadhrat Jibra'eel υ came to me and said, "O Muhammad ρ! Regardless of your age, you must die one day and regardless of whom you love, you must leave him one day. You shall then receive the recompense of whatever (good or evil) you have done. Indeed, the dignity of a Mu'min lies in the Tahajjud salaah and his honour lies in contentment and abstinence
38. Two Rakaahs in late hours of the night are more valuable than all the riches of this world. But for fear of it being too difficult for my Ummah, I would have made it Fardh (obligatory)
39. Keep performing the Tahajjud Salaat because it has always been the practice of the righteous ones, and the means of gaining closeness to Allaah. The Tahajjud salaah keeps one away from sins, causes forgiveness of sins and improves physical health
40. Allaah says, "O son of Aadam! Do not be weak in performing four Rakaahs salaah in the early morning, for I shall then suffice for you in all your tasks for the day

The books of Ahadeeth are full of narrations discussing the virtues of salaah and encouraging Muslims to perform their salaah. The forty short Ahadeeth mentioned above can be memorised, thus earning one the rewards of memorising forty Ahadeeth. Salaah is truly a tremendous favour to us, but this is only appreciated by those who have enjoyed its taste. This is why Rasulullaah ρ called it the comfort of his eyes and used to spend the major part of the night standing before

Allaah. For the very same reason Rasulullaah ρ instructed us to be particular about salaah even as he lay on his deathbed.

It has been reported in several Ahadeeth that Rasulullaah ρ would often say, "Fear Allaah with regard to salaah." Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "Of all devotional acts, salaah is dearest to me."

One of the Sahabah ψ narrates, "I happened to go to the Masjid one night, where I found Rasulullaah ρ engaged in salaah. Eager to join him, I made my intention and stood behind him. He was reciting Surah Baqarah at that time and I thought that he would proceed into Ruku after completing a hundred verses. When he did not do this, I thought that he would perhaps proceed into Ruku after finishing two hundred verses. However, he did not stop even here. I was then certain that he would terminate with the end of the Surah. When Rasulullaah ρ completed the Surah, he repeated '*Allaahumma Lakal Hamd*' (All praise belongs to You, O Allaah) a number of times and then started to recite Surah Aal Imraan. Upon completing this Surah, he again repeated '*Allaahumma Lakal Hamd*' three times before started Surah Maa'idah. He proceeded into Ruku only after completing this Surah. In Ruku he recited the Tasbeeh ('*Subhaana Rabbiyal Adheem*') and some other prayers which I could not identify. He then proceeded into Sajdah and recited the Tasbeeh ('*Subhaana Rabbiyal A'laa*') with some other prayers. Thereafter when Rasulullaah ρ started to recite Surah An'aam in the second Rakaah, I was forced to break away."

The amount that Rasulullaah ρ recited in just one Rakaahs equals about one sixth of the entire Qur'an. Besides this, Rasulullaah ρ must be reciting calmly and with proper Tajweed. How long must this Rakaah have been? It was for this reason that Rasulullaah ρ's feet would often swell in salaah. However, no degree of difficulty and inconvenience will deter a person whose heart has tasted the sweetness of salaah.

Hadhrat Abu Is'haaq Sabee'i رحمه الله was a famous Muhaddith who passed away at the age of 100. He would often lament in his old age that his advanced age and resulting weakness had deprived him of the joy he experienced in salaah. He added, "I am now only able to recite Surah Baqarah Aal Imraan in my salaah of two Rakaahs." Just these two Surahs occupy about one eighth of the Qur'aan.

Hadhrat Muhammad bin Sammaak رحمه الله who was a famous Sufi writes, "My neighbour in Kufa had a son who fasted every day and engaged in salaah and chanting hymns (glorifying Allaah) during the night. The strain of this made him so weak that his body was reduced to mere skin and bones. His father therefore asked me to speak to him. I was once sitting at my door when the youth passed by. He greeted me with Salaam and sat down. I had hardly said anything when he initiated the conversation by saying, 'Dear uncle! Perhaps you intend to advise me to reduce my efforts. I had a few friends in town and we decided among ourselves to compete in worshipping Allaah. They had all exerted themselves so much that Allaah soon sent for them and they left happy and content. It is now only I who is left behind. What will they think of when my deeds become apparent to them and they see the deficiency in my actions? Dear Uncle! They strived very hard to achieve their objective.' He then started to describe exactly what sacrifices his friends had made, which left all the listeners dumbstruck. The youth then got up and left. Three days later I was informed that the youth had also passed away (May Allaah's mercies be showered upon him)."[1]

Even in these wayward days, there are people who spend a major portion of the night in Ibaadah and dedicate their days to teaching and propagating the Deen. Which person in the Indo-Pak subcontinent has not heard of Hadhrat Mujaddid Alf Thaani رحمه الله? One of his spiritual successors by the name of Moulana Abdul Waahid Lahori رحمه الله once posed a question saying, "Will there be no salaah in Jannah?" "Why should there be salaah in Jannah," someone said, "when Jannah is a place for rewards and not for actions." He then sighed deeply and started to weep, saying, "How will I be able to pass my days in Jannah without salaah?"

It is really because of such people that this world still remains in existence and they have perceived the true reality of this worldly life. May Allaah give us the strength of their Imaan and love for Ibaadah. Aameen.

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to relate the following Hadith from the *Munnabihaat* of by Haafidh Ibn Hajar رحمه الله. It states that Rasulullaah ρ was once sitting with the Sahabah ψ when he remarked, "The three things of this world that are very dear to me are perfume, my wives and salaah, which is the comfort of my eyes." Hadhrat Abu

[1] Nuzhatul Majaalis.

Bakr τ then said, "That is so. The three things that I love most are to look at your face, to spend of my wealth on you and the fact that my daughter is married to you." To this, Hadhrat Umar τ joined in saying, "That is so. What I most love is enforcing what is right, forbidding evil and dressing in old clothing." "That is so," Hadhrat Uthmaan τ said, "The three things I love most are feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and reciting the Qur'an." "Quite so", said Hadhrat Ali τ, "What I love most is serving a guest, fasting on a very hot day and striking at the enemy with my sword."

Hadhrat Jibra'eel υ then appeared and said to Rasulullaah ρ, "Allaah has sent me to inform you of what I would love most had I been human." When Rasulullaah ρ asked to be informed, Hadhrat Jibra'eel υ stated, "Had I been like you, the three things I would have loved most are guiding people who are astray, loving those who worship Allaah despite their abject poverty and helping the poor men who have families to support. And the three things that Allaah loves of His servants are striving in His path, weeping when seeking forgiveness and forbearance when suffering poverty."

Hafidh Ibnu Qayyim رحمه الله writes in his *Zaadul Ma'aad* that salaah secures sustenance, improves good health, dispels diseases, strengthens the heart, lends radiance and beauty to the face, brings joy to the soul, keeps the limbs energetic, cures laziness, comforts the hearts, feeds the soul, illuminates the heart, guards the bounties of Allaah and protects against Allaah's punishment. It keeps Shaytaan away and brings a person nearer to Allaah. In brief, salaah has a profound bearing on safeguarding the good health of body and soul and repels all evils associated with this world as well as the Aakhirah and secures the good of both worlds.

Chapter Two

Warnings against Neglecting salaah

The books of Ahadeeth speak about severe punishment for those who neglect salaah. From amongst the many Ahadeeth on the subject, only a few will be cited here. While only a mild warning should suffice from the most truthful Rasulullaah ρ, yet it was because of his extreme love and mercy for his Ummah that he has warned them repeatedly not to be negligent in this regard. It is, however, regrettable that despite of all this, we are still negligent of our salaah even though Rasulullaah ρ had paid so much attention to warning us against such negligence. How shameful will it then be for us to regard ourselves as part of his Ummah and his followers?

Hadith 1

Hadhrat Jaabir bin Abdullaah τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "Discarding salaah associates one with Kufr." Another narration states, "Discard salaah associates one with Kufr and Shirk." Yet another Hadith states, "It is only salaah that separates a person from Kufr and Shirk."

NOTE: There are numerous other narrations on the subject apart from these. Rasulullaah ρ once said, "Hasten with your salaah when it is cloudy (so as not to miss the correct time) because discarding salaah causes one to become a Kaafir." This is a stern warning against even missing the correct time of salaah, equating it with discarding salaah completely. Although Ulema issue the verdict of Kufr only against a person who rejects (the obligatory nature of) salaah, yet these words of Rasulullaah ρ should be taken very seriously by those who have regard for him.

It should be noted that some of the very important Sahabah ψ were of the opinion that verdict of Kufr can be given against the person who intentionally discards his salaah. Amongst them are Hadhrat Umar τ, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ and Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ. Amongst the jurists who shared this view were Imaam Ahmad bin

Hanbal رحمه الله, Hadhrat Is'haaq bin Rahway رحمه الله and Hadhrat Ibn Mubaarak رحمه الله. May Allaah save us all from this!

Hadith 2

Hadhrat Ubaadah bin Saamit τ says that amongst the seven things that Rasulullaah ρ emphasised to him were:
(1) Do not ascribe anything as partner to Allaah even though you may be cut into pieces, burnt alive or crucified
(2) Do not miss salaah intentionally because the one who does this leaves the fold of Islaam
(3) Do not disobey Allaah because this earns His wrath
(4) Do not drink liquor because it is the mother of all evils

NOTE: A Hadith from Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ states that Rasulullaah ρ said to him, "Never ascribe anything as partner to Allaah even though you may be cut into pieces or burnt alive. Never discard salaah intentionally because Allaah is free from all obligations towards the person who intentionally discards salaah. Ensure also that you never take wine because it is the key to all sins."

Hadith 3

Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ enjoined upon him the following ten things:

1. Do not ascribe anything as partner to Allaah even though you may be killed or burnt alive
2. Do not disobey your parents even if they command you to separate from your wife or your wealth
3. Do not neglect the Fardh salaah intentionally because Allaah is free from obligation towards the person who intentionally neglects his Fardh salaah
4. Do not consume wine because it is an evil that lies at the root of every vice
5. Do not disobey Allaah because this attracts the wrath of Allaah.
6. Do not flee from the enemy in battle even though all your comrades may have fallen
7. Do not flee from a place where an epidemic has broken out
8. Spend on your family members according to your means
9. Never give up your rod when disciplining them
10. Keep warning them against neglecting their duties towards Allaah.

NOTE: This Hadith tells us that the children of the household should never rest assured that their father will never use the rod in checking their errant behaviour. They should never feel that they are free to flout the rules of the Shari'ah as they please. Sometimes it is necessary to use the rod when discipline cannot be had otherwise. Nowadays many people spare the rod at the beginning out of love and when their children get spoilt and their bad habits take firm root, they cry and lament. Allowing bad habits to fester is really no kindness to the child, but an act of cruelty. Who would like to save a child from a surgical operation under advice from a doctor for the simple reason that it would cause pain to him? People would much rather force the child into such a procedure if they needed to.

Rasulullaah ρ often said, "Instruct your child to perform Salaat when he is seven years old and punish him if he neglects it after turning ten." Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ said, "Keep watch over the salaah of your children and inculcate good habits in them. Hadhrat Luqman The Wise رحمه الله used to say, "For a father to use the rod on a child is as necessary as water is for the fields." Rasulullaah ρ is reported to have said, "When admonishing his children, a person earns more reward from Allaah than spending a *Saa* of grain in Allaah's path."

Rasulullaah ρ also said, "May Allaah have mercy upon the person who keeps a lash hanging in his house for the admonition of those in the household." On another occasion he said, "No father can give his child a gift better than teaching them good manners."

Hadith 4

Hadhrat Naufal bin Mu'aawiya τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "The person who has missed a single salaah is like one who has lost all his family and wealth."

NOTE: Salaah is usually missed when a person is preoccupied with his family members or in pursuit of money. According to this Hadith, the loss sustained in missing a salaah is as great as losing one's entire family and property and being left all by oneself. If we are warned by some reliable person about the presence of robbers on a certain road and that people are being robbed and killed during the night, which person will be brave enough to travel there even during the day. Not only one or twice but Rasulullaah ρ has warned us so many times and

despite us believing that he was the true Rasul (Messenger) of Allaah, the warnings still fall on deaf ears.

Hadith 5

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, " The person who combines two salaahs without a valid excuse reaches one of the doors of Kabaa'ir (major sins)."

NOTE: Hadhrat Ali τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once said, "Do not delay in three things; salaah when its time has set in, burial when the body is ready and marriage of a woman when her match is found." Even people who regard themselves to be religious people perform a number of their salaahs in combination upon returning home with trivial excuses of travel, business or profession. To delay salaah until after its set time without a valid excuse (illness, etc) is a major sin. While it may not be as disastrous as neglecting salaah altogether, it is still a very serious sin and should not be perpetrated.

Hadith 6

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Amr τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ was once talking about salaah when he said, "On the Day of Qiyaamah, salaah shall be a light, an argument in his favour and a means of deliverance for the person who guards it. On the contrary, there will be no light, no defence and no deliverance from punishment for him who does not guard his salaah. Instead he shall share the fate of Fir'oun, Haamaan and Ubay bin Khalaf."

NOTE: Everybody knows that Fir'oun (Pharoah) was such a terrible Kaafir that he actually had the audacity to proclaim that he was Allaah, Haamaan was his chief minister and aide. Ubay bin Khalaf was an ardent enemy of Islaam from amongst the Mushrikeen of Makkah who used to say to Rasulullaah ρ, "I have reared a horse which I feed very well. Riding this horse, I shall slay you one day ." Rasulullaah ρ once replied saying, "Inshaa Allaah! It shall be I who will slay you." During the Battle of Uhud, he ran about in the field in search of Rasulullaah ρ saying, "If Muhammad ρ is not killed today, then I stand no chance of surviving." When he eventually found Rasulullaah ρ, he advanced to attack him, but the Sahabah ψ decided to finish him off before he reached Rasulullaah ρ. However, Rasulullaah ρ stopped them. When he drew closer, Rasulullaah ρ took a spear from one of the Sahabah ψ and struck Ubay with it, causing a little scratch on his neck. He immediately

fell off his horse and bolted towards his camp crying, "I swear by Allaah that Muhammad ρ has killed me." His companions tried to pacify him by telling him that it way only a light bruise that was of no concern. However, he was not consoled and said, "Muhammad ρ had once announced to me in Makkah that he would kill me, I swear by Allaah that I will be killed even if he only spat at me."

It is written that he then cried like a bull. Abu Sufyaan, who played a great role in the fighting that day, put him to shame for crying over such a slight wound, but he said, "Do you know who inflicted this injury upon me? It was none else but Muhammad ρ. I swear by Laat and Uzza that if my suffering should be distributed amongst all the people of Hijaaz, none of them would survive. Since the time he declared that he would kill me, I was sure that he would be the one to kill me. If he only spat at me after that declaration, I would be no more." He then died on his way back, only a day's journey from Makkah.

There are great lessons for us Muslims to learn here. Even a Mushrik like Ubay bin Khalaf is so convinced by the words of Rasulullaah ρ that he does not doubt his own death. What about ourselves? Although we believe that Rasulullaah ρ was the Nabi of Allaah, although consider his words to be true and despite the love we proclaim to have for him, how much do we act upon his advice and how much do we fear the punishments about which he has warned us! It is for every one of us to ponder over this and judge himself.

Quoting this Hadith in his *Kitaabuz Zawaajir*, Haafidh Ibn Hajar رحمه الله has also discussed Qaaroon with Fir'oun and the others. He writes that "the person who neglects his salaah will share the fate of these people on the Day of Qiyaamah because it he shares such traits with them which cause him to neglect his salaah. Therefore, when a person neglects salaah due to his pursuit of wealth, he will share the fate of Qaaroon. If he neglects salaah due to his pursuit for power, then he will share the fate of Fir'oun. If he neglects salaah due to his pursuit of position and attaining proximity to a ruler, then he will share the fate of Haamaan and if he neglects salaah due to his preoccupation with trade, he will ultimately share the fate of Ubay Bin Khalaf."

The worst of punishments in the Aakhirah are in store for people like this, as stated in several Ahadeeth. All of this is true regardless of the status of the Ahadeeth discussing them. While the Mushrikeen will suffer their punishment forever, the Mu'mineen will be released after

their period of punishment is over and will then be admitted into Jannah. However, this period of time will be no easy sentence and who knows how long this will last?

Hadith 7

It is stated in a Hadith that Allaah bestows the following five favours on a person who guards his salaah:

1. His daily bread is made easy for him
2. He is saved from Punishments in the grave
3. He will receive his record of deeds in his right hand on the Day of Qiyaamah
4. He will cross the bridge of Siraa' with the speed of lightning
5. He will enter Jannah without reckoning

As for him who neglects his salaah, he shall suffer five types of punishments in this world, three at the time of death, three in the grave and three after resurrection. Those in this world are:

1. He is not blessed in his worldly life
2. He is deprived of the light that is evident upon the faces of the righteous
3. He receives no rewards for his good deeds
4. His du'aas are not answered
5. He has no share in the du'aas of the pious

The punishments at the time of death are:

1. He dies in disgrace
2. He dies hungry
3. He dies so thirsty that all the water in the oceans of the world cannot quench.

The punishments in the grave are:

1. He is crushed to such an extent that the ribs of one side penetrate the ribs of the other side
2. Fire is burnt inside the grave and he will be rolled on burning embers all day and night
3. A serpent with fiery eyes and nails of iron equal in length to a day's journey is set upon him. It will shout at him, saying, "My Allaah has instructed me to beat you until sunrise for neglecting Fajr, until Asr for neglecting Zuhr, until sunset for neglecting Asr, until Isha for neglecting Maghrib and until dawn for neglecting Isha". This serpent

will keep on beating him in this manner until the Day of Qiyaamah, with each blow thrusting him to a depth of seventy arm's lengths.

The punishments he will receive after resurrection are:
1. His reckoning will be most difficult
2. Allaah will be angry with him
3. He will be flung into Jahannam

According to one narration, the following three lines will be inscribed on his forehead:
"O you who neglected Allaah's duty! O you who has deserved Allaah's wrath! You may now lose hope of Allaah's mercy just as you neglected your duty to Allaah."

Although I have not been able to trace this complete text in the original books of Ahadeeth, most of the rewards and punishments stated have been corroborated by several other Ahadeeth. Some have already been quoted and others will be quoted soon. Since it has already been stated that neglect of salaah leads one to Kufr, it is no surprise that the punishment for this offence should be as severe as mentioned. However, despite a person deserving all of this punishment, Allaah does state in the Qur'aan, "**Verily Allaah shall not forgive that Shirk be committed but will forgive all other sins for whom He wills.**"[1] Although Allaah may pardon anybody who neglects his salaah if He pleases, who can be sure of this pardon?

It is also stated in Hadith that Allaah will hold three courts on the Day of Qiyaamah. The first will judge between Kufr and Islaam and here there will be no pardon. The second will judge the duties people owe towards one another. All the wronged ones will receive their compensated here, which will either be paid by the aggressor or by Allaah Himself, if He so pleases. The third court will deal with the duties people owed to Allaah. Here the doors of Allaah's mercy will be thrown open and Allaah shall forgive whomsoever He wishes. In view of all that has been said above, it must be understood that although we deserve the punishments that have been prescribed for the sins we commit, the all embracing Mercy of Allaah knows no bounds.

It was the practice of Rasulullaah ρ to ask the Sahabah ψ about their dreams after the Fajr salaah. Rasulullaah ρ would then interpret the dream related to him. One day after enquiring from the Sahabah ψ, Rasulullaah ρ himself narrated a long dream in which two men came

[1] Surah Nisaa, verse 116.

and took him with them. Amongst various other sights that he saw, Rasulullaah ρ added, “I noticed the head of a person being crushed with a rock so violently that the stone rolled down over a long distance after striking the head. The head would then return to its original form by the time the stone was brought back to be used for crushing it yet again. This process continued relentlessly. Upon enquiring from one of my companions, I was told that after learning the Qur'an, the person failed to practise upon it and would also to go to sleep without performing the Fardh salaah.”

Another similar narration states that when Rasulullaah ρ saw (also in his dream) that a group of people were being treated in a like manner, he queried the reason. Hadhrat Jibra'eel υ then informed him that these were people neglected their salaah.

Hadhrat Mujaahid رحمه الله said, “Allaah blesses the people who guard their salaah, just as He blessed Hadhrat Ibraheem υ and his descendants.”

Hadhrat Anas τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, “If a person dies with sincere Imaan and after having observed the commandments of Allaah, performing salaah and paying zakaah, then he dies in a state that Allaah is pleased with him.”

Hadhrat Anas τ also narrates from Rasulullaah ρ that Allaah says “I restrain punishment deserved by a locality when I see some people amongst them who frequent the Masjid, who love one another for My sake and who pray for forgiveness in the hours of darkness.”

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ wrote to Hadhrat Salmaan τ saying, “Spend most of your time in the Masjid because I have heard Rasulullaah ρ say, “The Masjid is the home of people with Taqwa. Allaah has taken a pledge to shower His mercy upon the person who spends most of his time in the Masjid. Allaah shall also give him peace, allow him to cross the bridge of *Siraat* with ease and will be well pleased with him.”

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, “The Masaajid are the Houses of Allaah and those attending them are His visitors. When everybody treats his visitors kindly, why should Allaah not be kind to His guests?”

Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, “Allaah loves the person who is attached to the Masjid.”

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that he heard the Nabi of Allaah ρ saying, "When a dead person is laid in his grave the two angels Munkar and Nakeer come to him even before the people at the burial can leave. If the person is a Mu'min, his good deeds then start to surround him. Salaah settles close to his head, zakaah to his right, fasting to his left and the remaining good deeds at his feet, thus preventing anyone from approaching him. The angels then have to question him from a distance."

One of the Sahabah ψ reports that whenever the members of Rasulullaah ρ's household faced any hardship, he would instruct them to perform salaah, reciting the verse, "**Instruct** *(encourage)* **your family to perform salaah and** *(you)* **yourself** *(must)* **remain steadfast on it. We do not ask provision** *(sustenance)* **from you, but We provide for you** *(your duty is to perform your salaah and not to forsake it in search of sustenance because We shall provide that for you)*. **The best** *(most excellent)* **result** *(reward in the Aakhirah)* **is for** *(adopting)* **Taqwa".**[1]

Hadhrat Asmaa رضي الله عنهما narrates that she heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "When all the people will be gathered on the Day of Qiyaamah, they will hear an angel announce, 'Where are those who glorified Allaah in ease and in adversity?' A group will rise up and enter Jannah without reckoning. He will then announce, 'Where are those who forsook their beds to spend their nights in worship?' Another group will rise up and enter Jannah without reckoning. The angel will then announce, 'Where are those whom trade and business did not distract from remembering Allaah?' A third group will rise up and also enter Jannah without reckoning."

Another Hadith states the same content with the addition that the angel will announce at the beginning, "All those present here today will see who the honoured people really are." This narration also adds that he will say at the third announcement, "Where are those whom trade and business did not distract from salaah and from remembering Allaah?"

After quoting this Hadith Sheikh Nassar Samarqandi رحمه الله writes, "After these three groups will have entered Jannah without reckoning, a monster with long neck, glowing eyes and an eloquent tongue will rise up from the Jahannam and say, 'I have been deputed to deal with all those who are proud and ill tempered.' It will then snatch up all such persons just as a fowl snatches up grain and it will then fling them into

[1] Surah TaaHaa, verse 132.

Jahannam. It will then return and say, 'This time I have been deputed to deal with all those who caused hurt to Allaah and His Nabi ρ'. It will then pick up all such persons and also cast them into Jahannam. Thereafter, it will appear for the third time and in a like manner snatch up and throw into Jahannam all those who made pictures. Reckoning will commence after these three groups have been dealt with."

It is said that in the past when people could see Shaytaan, someone asked him how could be like him. "I have never received such a request before," Shaytaan said to him, "What makes you ask this?" The person replied, "I just wish this from my heart." In reply, Shaytaan said, "Then neglect your salaah and swear frequently without caring whether it is truthful or not." The person then told Shaytaan, "I swear by Allaah that I would henceforth never give up salaah and never swear falsely." "Never before have I been tricked by a human being in this manner. I also swear by Allaah that I shall never again give advice to anyone in future."

Hadhrat Ubay τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Give the good news to all the Muslims that they shall attain high status and honour and their Deen shall prevail. However, there is no portion in the Aakhirah for those who carry out acts of Deen for worldly motives."

Rasulullaah ρ is reported to have said, "I saw Allaah in His best form and He said to me, 'O Muhammad! What are the Chief angels debating about?' When I declared that I had no knowledge about it, Allaah placed His hand on my chest and I could feel its coolness right through my heart. At that moment the entire universe was exposed before me and I said, 'They are debating about the things that elevate, those that atone for the sins, the rewards for the steps taken when proceeding for salaah in Jamaa'ah, the virtues of performing wudhu properly when it is very cold and the virtue of sitting in Masjid after performing one salaah to wait for the next salaah. The person who is particular about all of this will live a most excellent life and die a most excellent death."

Several Ahadeeth quote from Rasulullaah ρ that Allaah said, "O son of Aadam! Perform four Rakaahs of salaah in the early part of the day and I shall help you in accomplishing all your tasks during the rest of the day."

A Hadith in *Tambeehul Ghaafileen* states, "Salaah earns Allaah's pleasure, is loved by the angels, is the practice of the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام, a

light guiding towards the recognition of Allaah, causes du'aas to be accepted, enhances the blessings of one's daily sustenance, is the root of Imaan, rejuvenates the body, is a weapon against the enemy, shall intercede for those who regularly perform it, a light in the grave, a companion in the loneliness of the grave, a reply to the interrogation of the angels, shade against the sun on the Day of Qiyaamah, protection against the fire of Jahannam, a weight for the scales of good deeds, a swift means of crossing over the bridge of *Siraat* and a key to Jannah."

Hadhrat Uthmaan τ is reported to have said, "Allaah bestows nine favours on a person who guards his salaah and is particular about performing it at its fixed hours:

1. He is loved by Allaah
2. He enjoys good health
3. He is constantly under the protection of angels
4. His home receives constant blessings
5. The light of the righteous shines on his face
6. His heart is softened
7. He shall cross the bridge of *Siraat* with the speed of lightning
8. He is saved from Jahannam
9. His neighbours in Jannah are those about whom Allaah says, "**shall have no fear** *(of calamities)* **on them, neither shall they grieve** *(in the Aakhirah)*."

Rasulullaah ρ said that salaah is a pillar of Islaam and has the following ten virtues:

1. It is the beauty of the face
2. It is the light of the heart
3. It lends health and vitality to the body
4. It is company in the grave
5. It is means of securing Allaah's Mercy
6. It is a key to Jannah
7. It is a weight upon the scales of good deeds
8. It is a means of gaining Allaah's pleasure
9. It is the price of Jannah
10. It is protection against the fire of Jahannam

Rasulullaah ρ then added that the person who is particular of salaah really establishes his Deen while the person who neglects it is really demolishing his Deen.

A Hadith states, "Salaah is a light of the home, so illuminate your homes."[1] A well known narration states that the limbs washed when performing wudhu and those touching the ground in Sajdah will shine brightly on the Day of Qiyaamah, by which this Ummah will be distinguished from others. Another Hadith states that when a calamity befalls people from the heavens, those inside the Masjid will be saved.[2]

Several Ahadeeth make it evident that the fire of Jahannam has been forbidden from burning the parts of the body that bear the signs of Sajdah. Another Hadith states that salaah humiliates Shaytaan and Sadaqah breaks his back.[3]

A Hadith states that when Rasulullaah ρ once saw Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ lying on his stomach, he asked, "Are you suffering from stomach pains?" When Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ replied in the affirmative, Rasulullaah ρ advised, "Then get up and perform salaah because salaah will cure you."

Rasulullaah ρ once saw Jannah in his dream, where he heard the footsteps of Hadhrat Bilaal τ. The next morning he asked Hadhrat Bilaal τ, "What deed of yours allowed you to follow me even to Jannah?" Hadhrat Bilaal τ replied: "Whenever my wudhu breaks, even at night, I perform a new wudhu and then perform as many Rakaahs of Nafl salaah as I can."

Hadhrat Safeeri رحمه الله reports that the angels refer to a person who neglects the Fajr salaah as "O you sinner!", the one who neglects the Zuhr salaah as "O you loser!", the one who neglects the Asr salaah as "O you transgressor!", the one who neglects the Maghrib salaah as "O you Kaafir!" and the one who neglects the Isha salaah as "O you destroyer (of his duties to Allaah)!"

Allaama Shi'rani رحمه الله writes, "It should be noted that while calamities are averted from localities where people are particular about salaah, they frequent localities where the people neglect salaah. Earthquakes, bolts of thunder and the sinking of houses are commonplace in areas where people are negligent about their salaah. Guarding just one's own salaah is not sufficient because when a calamity strikes, it does not befall the guilty ones exclusively but affects everybody in area.

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[1] *Jaami'us Sagheer*.
[2] *Jaami'us Sagheer*.
[3] *Jaami'us Sagheer*.

The Sahabah ψ once asked Rasulullaah ρ whether they can be destroyed while there are pious people in their midst. Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Certainly, when evil becomes predominant." It is therefore necessary that the wrongdoers should also be instructed to fulfil Allaah's commandments and to refrain from sin.

Hadith 8

Rasulullaah ρ is reported to have said, "A person who misses his salaah and then makes it up later shall remain in Jahannam for a period of one *Huqb*, which is equal to eighty years, each year comprising of three hundred and sixty days, with each a day of the Aakhirah being equal to one thousand years of this world."

NOTE: Hadhrat Abu Laith Samarqandi رحمه الله reports a Hadith in which Rasulullaah ρ said, "The name of a person who neglects even a single Fardh salaah intentionally is written on the gate of Jahannam through which he will enter." Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once instructed that they make du'aa to Allaah saying, "O Allaah! Do not let any one of us be a wretched and deprived person." Rasulullaah ρ then said: "Do you know who is a wretched and deprived person?" When the Sahabah ψ begged to be informed, Rasulullaah ρ explained to them saying, "A wretched and deprived person is he who neglects his salaah because there is nothing for him in Islaam." Another Hadith states, "Allaah will not care for the person who neglects salaah intentionally. For such a person there awaits a terrible punishment."

It is reported in a Hadith that amongst the ten persons who will be especially punished will be the person who neglects his salaah. His hands will be tied while angels shall strike him on his face and back. Jannah will tell him that it has no room for him, while Jahannam will call to him saying, "Come to me, for you belong to me and I am yours." It is also reported that there is a valley in Jahannam called *Lamlam,* which is infested with serpents as fat as the neck of a camel and as long as one month's journey. It is here that people neglecting salaah shall be punished.

Another Hadith reports that there is a valley in Jahannam known as the Pit of Grief, which is infested with scorpions as large as mules. This place is also reserved for punishing people who neglect salaah. Of

course, there is none to question the Most Merciful Allaah if He pardons someone, but who is prepared to ask for His pardon?

Haafidh Ibn Hajar رحمه الله writes in his *Zawaajir* that when a woman died, her brother who was present at her burial happened to lose his wallet in the grave, which was then buried with the dead body. He realised this only after returning and was distressed about it. He therefore decided to secretly dig up the grave to recover the wallet. However, when he dug up the grave, he found that it was filled with flames. Grief stricken, he returned home and related the story to his mother. Upon enquiring from her, he came to learn that his sister used to delay her salaah and performed it only after its fixed hours. May Allaah save us from such practices.

Hadith 9

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "There is no place in Islaam for a person who does not perform his salaah and there is no salaah without wudhu." Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ also reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "There is no Islaam in a person when there is no salaah in him. The position of salaah in Islaam is like the position of the head in a body."

NOTE: Those people need ponder over these words of Rasulullaah ρ who do not perform their salaah but let alone regarding themselves to be Muslims, they also pride themselves as being champions of Islaam. They dream of reviving the past glory of Islaam, but do not care to know how meticulously those responsible for that glory stuck to the practices of Islaam.

When Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ suffered from a condition of the eye, he was informed that for the disease to be treated, he would have to miss his salaah for a few days. "This is impossible!" he said, "I have heard Rasulullaah ρ say that the person who does not perform his salaah shall stand before Allaah while Allaah is angry with him." Another narration states that he was told to perform his Sajdah on a wooden plank, to which he replied, "I can never perform my salaah in this manner." Enduring a lifetime of blindness was easier for the Sahabah ψ than missing their salaah even for a few days even though this was permissible under such circumstances.

Hadhrat Umar τ was stabbed so seriously that blood continuously poured from his wounds and he was often unconscious. In fact, it was

with these very wounds that he lost his life. However, even in this condition when he was informed of the time of salaah, he would perform salaah in that very condition, saying, "There is no share in Islaam for a person who does not perform his salaah."

Nowadays, people consider it in the best interests of the patient not to allow him to perform salaah and to rather pay the expiation afterwards. On the contrary, during those days it was considered in the best interests of the patient to perform the salaah if he was able to. What a world of difference!

When Hadhrat Ali τ once requested Rasulullaah ρ to give him a servant, Rasulullaah ρ said, "You may choose any of these three slaves." Upon Hadhrat Ali τ requesting that Rasulullaah ρ select one, Rasulullaah ρ pointed towards a certain man and said, "Take him because he is particular about his salaah. However, you may not beat him because we are forbidden from beating those who perform salaah." We, on the other hand, mock at our servants and consider them liabilities if they perform their salaah.

The famous ascetic Hadhrat Sufyaan Thowri رحمه الله once experienced a state of ecstasy because of which he remained indoors for seven days without sleep, food and drink. When his Sheikh was informed of his condition, he inquired if Hadhrat Sufyaan رحمه الله was observing the hours of his salaah. He was informed that his salaah was in order, the Sheikh remarked, "All praise belongs to Allaah Who has not allowed Shaytaan to gain the upper hand over him."

Part Two

Salaah in Jamaa'ah

As we have stated in the foreword, there are many people who perform their salaah regularly but are not particular about performing their salaah in Jamaa'ah, despite the fact that Rasulullaah ρ emphasised salaah in Jamaa'ah as much as he emphasised salaah itself. This part of the book also consists of two chapters; the first concerning the rewards of salaah in Jamaa'ah and the second discussing the consequences of neglect it.

Chapter One

The Virtues of Performing Salaah in Jamaa'ah

Hadith 1

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "A salaah performed in Jamaa'ah is twenty seven times superior than salaah performed individually."

NOTE: When our purpose for performing salaah is to attain reward from Allaah, why should it not be performed in the Masjid, where the reward is so much greater without much extra effort. Nobody will be so foolish to settle for a single Dollar instead of twenty seven Dollars. However, the tragedy is that we are indifferent to the gains promised for our religious practices on account of our disregard for Deen. Many people fell that by closing their businesses for going to Masjid to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah, they will be losing business. Such excuses are insignificant in the sight of those people who have conviction in the promises of Allaah and who realise the value of the rewards that Allaah has to offer. It is such people whom Allaah praises in the Qur'aan, when He says, "*(These guided men are)* **Men whom neither trade nor commerce distracts from the Dhikr of Allaah, the establishment of salaah and the paying of zakaah** *(they carry out all these obligations despite the commitments they have towards their businesses and*

occupations). *(Their attitude is like this because)* **They fear a day** *(when they will pass away and the Day of Qiyaamah)* **when** *(because of fear and worries)* **their hearts and eyes will be overturned".**[1]

It is reported about Hadhrat Saleem Haddaad رحمه الله who was a businessman and ascetic that he would turn pale and become restless whenever he heard the Adhaan. He would then get up immediately, leaving his shop open as he recited some couplets which mean:

"When your caller gets up to call I quickly stand up in response to the call of my Exalted Master Who has no equal

In submission, obedience and filled with fervour, I reply to the beckoning call, saying, 'I am at your service, O The Most Bountiful

My face grows pale with fear and awe and my attention upon You distracts me from all other preoccupations

I swear by You that nothing is dearer to me than remembering You, for remembering anyone other than You gives no sweetness to my mouth

When will the time arrive for us to be together, for a lover is happy only when he is with his beloved?

He whose eyes have seen the light of Your Beauty will rather die in anticipation but can never be consoled without it"

A Hadith states, "The people frequenting the Masjid are its pegs, the angels are their companions who visit them when they are ill and who assist them when they need to do anything."[2]

Hadith 2

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Salaah performed in Jamaa'ah is twenty five times superior to salaah performed in one's house or shop. This is so because when a person performs wudhu thoroughly and walks to Masjid with the sole intention of performing salaah, his every step earns him the reward of a good deed and wipes out one sin. If he continues sitting in the Masjid in the state of wudhu after performing the salaah, the angels continue

[1] Surah Noor, verse 37.
[2] *Mustadrak* of Haakim.

seeking Allaah's forgiveness for him. Furthermore, he continues earning the rewards of performing salaah for as long as he remains in the Masjid waiting for salaah.”

NOTE: Whereas the first Hadith stated that salaah in Jamaa'ah is twenty seven times more virtuous than salaah performed individually, this Hadith mentions that it is twenty five times more virtuous. Ulema have rendered various explanations to solve this seeming inconsistency. Amongst these are the following explanations:

1. This variation from twenty five to twenty seven is due to the variation in every person’s *Ikhlaas* (sincerity)
2. Whereas the *Sirri* (quiet) salaahs (Zuhr and Asr) are twenty-five times superior, the *Jahri* (loud) salaahs (Fajr, Maghrib and Isha) are twenty seven times superior
3. Because it is somewhat difficult to attend the Fajr and Isha salaah because of the cold and darkness, these salaahs hold a reward that is twenty seven times superior. On the other hand, the superiority of the remaining salaahs is twenty five times more
4. In the early days of Islaam, the superiority was twenty-five times, but because of His special favour to the Ummah of Rasulullaah ρ, Allaah subsequently increased the reward to twenty-seven times. This has been the case with several other injunctions of Deen as well.
5. Some commentators of Ahadeeth have offered a unique explanation when they state that the reward for salaah in Jamaa'ah mentioned in this Hadith is not merely 25 times more as stated in the previous Hadith, but that the rewards are multiplied 25 times. By this calculation, the rewards for a single salaah in Jamaa'ah will total a figure of 33 554 432, a figure that is not at all beyond the bounty of the Most Generous Allaah. When neglecting one salaah can cause punishment in Jahannam for a period of one *Huqub* (as discussed in the last chapter), this tremendous a reward for one salaah in Jamaa'ah is quite understandable.

Rasulullaah ρ has also explained to us how the reward goes on increasing in the case of a person who leaves his house after performing wudhu with the express intention of performing his salaah in Jamaa'ah in the Masjid. His every step then earns him the reward of a good deed as well as obliterating one sin. When the Banu Salama tribe of Madinah decided to move closer to the Masjid, Rasulullaah ρ advised them to remain where they were because their every step

taken while coming to Masjid would be recorded in their account of deeds.

A Hadith states, "The likeness of a person performing wudhu at home and then leaving for Masjid is like a person who leaves for Hajj after donning the *Ihraam* at his house."

Rasulullaah ρ then proceeded further to explain another act of great value, which is to remain sitting in Masjid after the salaah has been completed. When doing this, the angels constantly pray that Allaah should forgive him. Since the angels are an accepted and innocent creation of Allaah, the blessings of their du'aas are self-evident.

Hadhrat Muhammad bin Samaak رحمه الله was a famous scholar and saint and the student of Imaam Muhammad رحمه الله. He passed away at the age of 103, during which time he used to perform two hundred Rakaahs of Nafl salaah daily. He writes, "I never missed the first Takbeer of salaah in Jamaa'ah for forty years, except upon the sole occasion when my mother passed away." He also writes, "Because I know that salaah in Jamaa'ah is twenty five times superior, I repeated a salaah twenty five times when I happened to miss salaah in Jamaa'ah on one occasion. I was then told in my dream, 'Muhammad! Although you have repeated your salaah 25 times, what about (making up for) the *'Aameen'* that the angels say (when salaah is performed in Jamaa'ah)?"

It is reported in many Ahadeeth that when the Imaam says *'Aameen'* after Surah Faatiha, the angels also say *'Aameen'*, because of which all the past sins of a person are forgiven when his *Aameen* coincides with that of the angels. This is possible only in a salaah performed in Jamaa'ah. Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Hayy رحمه الله therefore comments on this story by saying, "Even if a person goes on repeating his salaah a thousand times by himself, he cannot get the collective blessing of a salaah in Jamaa'ah." This is obvious because he not only loses the virtues of the *Aameen* with the angels, but also the blessings of the congregation and the prayers of the angels after salaah, which in itself holds many other spiritual benefits. It should also be borne in mind that the prayers of angels can be deserved only when the salaah is a proper one. If the salaah of a person is not as it ought to be, it will be flung back like a dirty rag at his face. How then can the angels pray for him?

Hadith 3

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ said, “If a person wishes to meet Allaah as a Muslim on the Day of Qiyaamah, he must perform his salaah at a place where the Adhaan is called out (in a Masjid) because Allaah has prescribed such practices through His Nabi ρ which are nothing but guidance and salaah in Jamaa'ah is one of them. If you start performing your salaah at your homes as some people do, you will be discarding the Sunnah of Nabi ρ and as soon as you forsake his Sunnah, you go astray. When a person performs wudhu correctly and then leaves for the Masjid, he receives the reward of a good deed for each step he takes and one sin is wiped out. During the lifetime of the Nabi of Allaah ρ none would miss salaah in Jamaa'ah except an open hypocrite or an invalid. In fact, even the hypocrite dared not miss salaah in Jamaa'ah and a sick person who could be taken to Masjid with the help of two men would be helped to join the Jamaa'ah.”

NOTE: The Sahabah ψ gave so much importance to performing salaah in Jamaa'ah that even the ill would attend the salaah if he could get to the Masjid in some way. This concern was quite natural when they found Rasulullaah ρ himself so particular about it. When Rasulullaah ρ was on his deathbed, he would often fall unconscious, but still persevered to perform wudhu after several attempts. Although he could barely stand, he then still proceeded to the Masjid with the help of Hadhrat Abbaas τ and another one of the Sahabah ψ. While Hadhrat Abu Bakr τ led the salaah, Rasulullaah ρ joined the Jamaa’ah.

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once said to him, “Worship Allaah as if you see Him before you, count yourself among the dead, beware of the curse of the oppressed ones and do not miss the Isha and Fajr salaahs with Jamaa’ah even if you have to crawl to the Masjid.” Another Hadith states that the Isha and Fajr salaahs are very difficult for the Munaafiqeen and if they knew the rewards of salaah in Jamaa’ah, they would go to the Masjid and join the Jamaa’ah even if they had to crawl.

Hadith 4

Hadhrat Anas bin Maalik τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, “A person who regularly performs salaah in Jamaa'ah with sincerity for forty days and without missing the first Takbeer will receive two certificates; one for deliverance from Jahannam and the other for freedom from hypocrisy.”

NOTE: The person who is regular with his salaah for forty days and joins the Jamaa'ah with sincerity from the very beginning (when the Imaam calls out the *Takbeer Tahreema*) shall neither be a Munaafiq nor shall he go to Jahannam. A Munaafiq (hypocrite) is a person who pretends to be a Muslim while Kufr still lurks in his heart. According to a Hadith, transformation of a man takes place in periods of forty days and it is for this reason that this Hadith stipulates the period of forty days. In fact, even the Soofiyaa attach importance to this period for spiritual discipline (which is called the *Chillah* in Urdu). Fortunate indeed are those who do not miss the Takbeer Tahreema for years altogether.

Hadith 5

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ saying, "When a person performs wudhu properly and then finds that the Jamaa'ah is over upon reaching the Masjid, he receives the reward of the Jamaa'ah without the rewards being diminished of those who performed their salaah in Jamaa'ah."

NOTE: It is indeed through Allaah's great favour and bounty that we are rewarded even for the effort and still earn the full reward of salaah in Jamaa'ah without actually joining it. Who is then the loser if we miss the bounties of the most Bountiful?

This Hadith also advises us not to forsake going to the Masjid for fear of the Jamaa'ah being over because we will still get the reward even if the Jamaa'ah is over. There is, however, no harm in not proceeding if we are certain that the Jamaa'ah is already over.

Hadith 6

Hadhrat Qubaath bin Ashyam Laythi τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The salaah of two persons performing salaah with one leading the other (as the Imaam) is liked by Allaah more than the salaah of four persons performing salaah individually. Similarly, the salaah of four persons performing salaah in Jamaa'ah is liked by Allaah more than the salaah of eight persons performing it individually. In a like manner, the salaah of eight persons performing salaah in Jamaa'ah is liked by Allaah more than one hundred persons performing it individually."

Another Hadith states, “A large congregation (Jamaa’ah) is more liked by Allaah than a small congregation.”

NOTE: Some people are of the opinion that there is no harm in hosting a small Jamaa’ah at their homes or business premises. Not only are such people depriving themselves of the reward of performing salaah in the Masjid, but they also lose the blessings of salaah in a large congregation. The bigger the congregation, the more pleasing it is to Allaah. When our sole aim is to attain the pleasure of Allaah, why should we not adopt a manner that is more pleasing to Him. A Hadith states that Allaah is pleased to see three things; a row of worshippers performing salaah in Jamaa’ah, a person performing the Tahajjud during the dead of night and a person fighting in the path of Allaah.”

Hadith 7

Hadhrat Sahl bin Sa’d Saa’idi τ narrates that he heard the Rasulullaah ρ say, “Give glad tidings to those who walk to the Masjid during hours of darkness that they will have perfect light on the Day of Qiyaamah.”

NOTE: The value of walking to Masjid in the darkness shall be realised on the Day of Qiyaamah when the dreadful spectacle of Qiyaamah will present itself and people will be caught up in a calamity of unimaginable proportions. The value of enduring the darkness of this world will be appreciated when a person will be given a light brighter than the sun. A Hadith states that such people will occupy the pulpits of light and will be free of all worries whereas others will be in utter confusion. Another Hadith says that on the Day of Qiyaamah Allaah will ask, “Where are My neighbours?” “Who are Your neighbours, O Allaah?” the angels will ask. Allaah will then reply, “Those people who used to frequent the Masaajid.”

A Hadith states, “Of all the places on earth the Masaajid are most loved by Allaah while the marketplaces are the most hateful to him.” Yet another Hadith refers to the Masaajid as the gardens of Jannah. Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once said, “Bear testimony to the Imaan of a person who frequents the Masjid.” Rasulullaah ρ then recited the verse of the Qur'an, “**Only those should attend** *(and care for)* **Allaah’s places of worship who believe in Allaah and the Last Day, who establish salaah, who pay Zakaah and who fear Allaah only. It is they who are expected to be rightly guided**”.[1]

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[1] Surah Taubah, verse 18.

Hereunder follows some Ahadeeth concerning the virtues salaah in Jamaa'ah:

- "Performing wudhu when it is difficult and then walking to the Masjid and remaining there (from one salaah) until the next salaah wipes out one's sins."
- "The further a person lives from the Masjid, the greater the blessing he receives." This is so because a person coming from far will have to walk further and (as already mentioned) every step will earn him a reward. It is for this reason some Sahabah ψ used to take short steps when going to Masjid in order to earn more rewards.
- "There are three things in this world for which people would fight with one another if they knew the rewards. These are (1) to call out Adhaan, to go to Masjid for the Zuhr salaah in the scorching heat of the sun and to be in the first row when performing salaah in Jamaa'ah."
- "On the Day of Qiyaamah when everybody will be most distressed and the heat of the sun will be intolerable, seven persons shall be accommodated under the shade of Allaah's mercy. Amongst them will be the person whose heart remains attached to the Masjid and he is anxious to return to the Masjid each time he needs to leave it on any account. Another Hadith states that Allaah loves those who love the Masjid.

Together with the innumerable blessings and rewards found in every command of the Shari'ah, each of them also has a reason and significance. It is however often difficult to understand all of these because none can encompass the knowledge and wisdom of Allaah. Some of the saints in Islaam have tried to explain the importance of salaah with Jamaa'ah, but their explanations vary with the extent of their understanding and their capacity to probe into Divine secrets. In his book *Hujjatullaahil Baaligha*, our respected Sheikh Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi رحمه الله writes, "To save the people from the destructive effects of their rituals, there is nothing more beneficial than to instate a religious services that it so common and public that it may be performed openly before everybody by any person, whether he be learned or not. People of both urban and rural areas should both be equally anxious to observe it and they should all compete with each other in it. It should be a source of pride amongst them and so universally practised that it forms part their social structure to the

extent that life without it may be worthless for them. This will help in establishing the worship of Allaah and this will be a ritual bringing tremendous good to them in place of the rituals and customs which had been causing them serious harm. Since salaah is the only religious command that surpasses all others in importance in terms of its proof, it is therefore necessary that it be established universally by propagating it and by arranging special congregations, where it can be performed with absolute unity of form and purpose."

"Furthermore every society and religion has people with leadership qualities, with the rest simply following them. While there are those who can be corrected with a little advice or reproach, there are others who are weak in faith and will discard acts of worship if they are not compelled to worship in public. It is therefore in the best interests of the Muslim society that all its members perform the act of worship in congregation so that the shirkers may be distinguished from the adherents. This will also cause people with less knowledge to follow the Ulema and cause the ignorant to learn the requirements of worship from the learned ones. The worshipper will be able to distinguish right from wrong so that the right may prevail and the wrong may be suppressed."

"Furthermore, such congregations of people expressing their love for Allaah, seeking His mercy, fearing Him and turning their hearts and souls to Him Alone has the profound effect of attracting His blessings and mercy from the heavens. In addition to this, the Muslim Ummah has been raised up so that the word of Allaah be held supreme on earth and so that the Deen of Islaam prevails over all other religions. This object cannot be achieved unless all Muslims, big and small, rich and poor, urban and rural all perform this most sacred ritual of Islaam by assembling in congregation in one place. It is for this reason that the Shari'ah especially emphasises the Jumu'ah (Friday) congregation and the Fardh salaahs in Jamaa'ah when it expounds its tremendous blessings and warns of the punishments for neglecting it."

For this important observance to be conspicuous, two types of congregations are required. The first is for the people of a family or a particular locality and the second is for the people of a town. Since it is easier for the people of a family or locality to gather at any time during the day, they have been directed to perform the five daily salaahs in Jamaa'ah. On the other hand, since it is more difficult for the people of

a town to gather, they have been directed to congregate every eighth day for the weekly Friday (Jumu'ah) salaah.

Chapter two

Admonition for Neglecting Salaah in Jamaa'ah

Just as Allaah has promised rewards for adhering to His commandments, He has also warned us of the punishment for neglecting them. Since we are in bondage to Allaah, we are obliged to obey Him and really deserve no rewards and favours for obeying Him. Despite this He has promised elaborate rewards for us due to His extreme mercy. Because it is common knowledge that no punishment can be too much for a bondsman who disobeys his Master, no warnings really need to be conveyed to us. Yet Allaah and His Rasool ρ have so very kindly cautioned us in so many ways and so very often only to save us from disaster. If even then we fail to heed, only we will be the ultimate losers.

Hadith 1

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "If without a valid excuse a person does not go to the Masjid (to perform salaah) despite hearing the Adhaan, his salaah is not accepted." When the Sahabah ψ asked what constituted a valid excuse, Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Illness or fear."

NOTE: While it may appears from this Hadith that the salaah performed at home (after hearing the Adhaan) is no salaah at all, scholars of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence do not share this viewpoint. They say that although the rewards promised for the Fardh salaah will not be attained in this case, yet the person performing the salaah at his place will be absolved of the obligation. However, according to some of the Sahabah ψ and the Taabi'een, salaah in Jamaa'ah (after hearing the Adhaan) is Fardh and it is Haraam to discard it. According to many other Ulema, such a person is not even absolved of the obligation of the salaah. Nevertheless, such a person is surely committing the grave sin of discarding Jamaa'ah.

Another Hadith also narrated by Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ states that such a person is guilty of disobedience of Allaah and Rasulullaah ρ. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ also mentioned, "No good is done by,

nor any good is done to the person who does not join the Jamaa'ah after hearing the Adhaan. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ said, "It is more appropriate to pour molten lead into the ears of a person who does not join the salaah in Jamaa'ah."

Hadith 2

Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Anas τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "A person who does not proceed (to the Masjid) for salaah after hearing the Adhaan is committing a great wrong and is guilty of an act of Kufr and hypocrisy."

NOTE: This Hadith makes it evident that failure to join the Jamaa'ah after hearing the Adhaan is not becoming of a Muslim and is the practice the Kuffaar and the Munaafiqeen. The warning is stern indeed. Another Hadith states that failure to join the Jamaa'ah after hearing the Adhaan is sufficient to render a person most unfortunate and most wretched.

Hadhrat Sulaymaan bin Abi Hathmah τ was an eminent personality during the early days of Islaam. Although he was born during the lifetime of Rasulullaah ρ, he was too young then to have heard any Hadith from Rasulullaah ρ. He was later appointed as head of the marketplace during the reign of Hadhrat Umar τ. When Hadhrat Umar τ once found him absent for the Fajr salaah, he went to his house and enquired from his mother why Sulaymaan was not present for the salaah that morning. She explained to Hadhrat Umar τ that Sulaymaan had performing Nafl salaah all night and was overpowered by sleep at the time of Fajr. To this, Hadhrat Umar τ remarked, "I would prefer performing my Fajr salaah in Jamaa'ah to performing Nafl salaah throughout the night."

Hadith 3

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "I have considered asking the youth to collect a huge quantity of firewood for me so that I could go around and set fire to the houses of those who perform their (Fardh) salaah at their own houses without any excuse."

NOTE: Despite the kindness and mercy that Rasulullaah ρ had for His Ummah and despite the fact that he was so greatly pained to see them suffer even the slightest difficulty, yet he was offended by this crime

that he considered setting fire to the houses of those who performed their salaah at their houses.

Hadith 4

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "If there are even three persons in a village or in a desert and they do not perform their salaah in Jamaa'ah, Shaytaan then gets the upper hand over them. Ensure that you always perform salaah in Jamaa'ah because a wolf will certainly devours a lonely sheep and Shaytaan is the wolf for man."

NOTE: This Hadith makes it clear that people busy in occupations such as farming ought to ensure that they perform their salaah in Jamaa'ah if they are three or more in number. In fact, it is best to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah even if they are two. Farmers generally do not perform salaah at all and consider their occupation a sufficient excuse for their neglect. Those who are considered pious do perform their salaah, but do so individually at their homes. If farmers working in nearby fields congregate at a place and perform salaah in Jamaa'ah, they can muster quite a big gathering and thereby receive the generous rewards from Allaah. Notwithstanding the sun, rain, heat and cold they keep busy for trifling worldly gains but lose tremendous amounts of Allaah's reward by losing their salaah. On the other hand, they can earn a reward fifty times more (according to a Hadith) by performing their salaah in Jamaa'ah in the fields.

Another Hadith states, "When a shepherd calls out the Adhaan at the foot of a hill or in the fields and starts his salaah, Allaah is greatly pleased with him and says proudly to the Angels, 'Look at My slave! He has called out the Adhaan and performing his salaah. All this he does out of his fear for Me. I therefore grant him forgiveness and declare that he shall be admitted into Jannah."

Hadith 5

Somebody once asked Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ about a person who fast all day and performs Nafl salaah all night but does not go to the Masjid to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah and for the Jumu'ah salaah. "He is doomed to Jahannam," replied Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ.

NOTE: Although such a person may eventually be released from Jahannam because he is a Muslim but who knows after how long. The ignorant among the Soofis and Sheikhs are very particular about Dhikr

and Nafl salaah and regard these to be an act of great piety while they are not particular about salaah in Jamaa'ah. It must always be remembered that no person can achieve piety without complete adherence to the practices of the beloved Rasulullaah ρ.

A Hadith states Allaah curses three persons; An Imaam who insists on leading people in salaah even though they do not like him on some reasonable account; a woman whose husband is displeased with her and a person who hears the Adhaan but does not go to the Masjid to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah.

Hadith 6

Hadhrat Ka'b Ahbaar τ said, "I swear by the Being Who revealed the Torah to Moosa υ, the Injeel to Isa υ, the Zaboor to Dawood υ and the Qur'aan to Muhammad ρ that the following verses were revealed with reference to performing the Fardh salaah in those places where the Adhaan is called out, "*(Do not forget)* **The day** *(of Qiyaamah)* **when the "shin"** *(this term is among the "Mutashaabihaat"[1])* **will be exposed and** *(it will be so magnificent that by seeing it)* **people** *(the Kuffaar)* **will be summoned** *(by their emotions)* **to prostrate but will be unable to** *(only the true Mu'mineen will be able to prostrate)*. *(Referring to the Kuffaar, Allaah says,)* **Their gazes will be cast down** *(because of embarrassment and fear)* **and disgrace shall overcome them. Indeed they used to be summoned to prostrate** *(in this world)* **when they were hail and healthy** *(but they refused to do so. Therefore, in the Aakhirah they will also be unable to do so)*."[2]

NOTE: The exposure of the 'shin' will be take place on the Day of Qiyaamah, because of which all Muslims will fall prostrate. However, there will be some whose backs will turn stiff and they will be unable to prostrate. Commentators have expressed differing opinions concerning whom these unfortunate people will be. According to this Hadith (which is corroborated by another narration from Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ), these people will be those who were called to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah, but failed to comply.

Other opinions are as follows:

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[1] **Mutashaabihaat:** These are those verses of the Qur'aan that are not as clear as the "Muhkamaat" in their interpretation. Their meanings are best known to Allaah. Allaah says about these verses, **"None knows their interpretation except Allaah"** [Surah 3, verse 7]. It is necessary to interpret these verses only in a manner that does not contradict what the Muhkam verses mention. When a suitable interpretation cannot be found, one should not delve too deeply into their meanings because the injunctions of Islaam are clearly mentioned in the Muhkamaat verses and failure to perfectly interpret the Mutashaabihaat will not affect a person's life.

[2] Surah Qalam, verses 42-43.

- Hadhrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri τ reports from Rasulullaah ρ that these will be those people who used to perform salaah only so that others may see them.
- They shall be the Kuffaar who did not perform salaah at all
- They shall be the Munaafiqeen.

And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

Nevertheless, this narration from Hadhrat Ka’b Ahbaar τ, which is corroborated by someone as eminent as Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ, who is regarded to be the Imaam of all commentators of the Qur'aan, makes it evident that the crime is a serious one indeed. How disgraced will a person be on the Day of Qiyaamah when he will be unable to prostrate before Allaah while all Muslims shall be doing so!

Many other warnings have been sounded against neglecting salaah in Jamaa’ah. In fact, none at all are necessary for a Muslim who holds the word of Allaah and His Rasool ρ in high esteem. As for those who have no regard for their word, even a thousand warnings will be meaningless. However, remorse will be fruitless when the time of retribution arrives.

Chapter Three

The Importance of Devotion and Humility in Salaah

While there are many people who perform their salaah and many who are particular about Jamaa'ah as well, but they perform their salaah in such a manner that instead of earning rewards for themselves, the salaah is flung back on their faces because of its deficiencies. However, this is not as bad as discarding salaah altogether, which is very serious, as we have already seen. Although we are deprived of the rewards by performing a defective salaah which is not accepted we will still be saved from the audacity of disobeying Allaah's commandments. Nonetheless since we have to spend our time, leave our work and experience some sort of inconvenience, why should we not ensure that we get the best returns for our time and labour by performing our salaah as best as we can?

This third part of the book is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will discuss a few verses from the Qur'aan concerning people who are condemned for the poor quality of their salaah and those who are praised for the excellence of their salaah. The second chapter will discuss stories about the salaah of a few people who dearly loved Allaah and the third chapter consists of the sayings of Rasulullaah ρ on this subject.

Chapter I

Verses of the Qur'aan

Verse 1

"**Their flesh and blood will never reach Allaah, but it is your Taqwa** *(your intention for sacrificing)* **that will reach Him.**"[1]

Although this particular verse contextually refers to sacrificing animals, the principle applies to all other devotional acts. It is by the sincerity and devotion in a service that acceptance would be judged by Allaah. Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal τ reports that when Rasulullaah ρ sent him to Yemen, he requested Rasulullaah ρ for some advice. Rasulullaah ρ said, "Be sincere in all your deeds because sincerity will magnify the value of an action, however insignificant it may be."

Hadhrat Thowbaan τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Blessed are the sincere ones because they are the lanterns of guidance who cause the worst evils to be driven off through their sincerity." Another Hadith states, "It is through the blessings of the weak ones as well as through their du'aas, their salaah and their sincerity that Allaah's help comes to this Ummah."

Verse 2

"**Destruction be for those performers of salaah** *(those Muslims who ought to be performing salaah)* **who neglect** *(to perform)* **their salaah; those who** *(when they do any good deed like performing salaah,)* **are ostentatious** *(do it to show off before others)*".[2]

Amongst the commentaries of those who neglect their salaah is that they miss the correct time of salaah, they are preoccupied with other thoughts while performing salaah and they forget the number of Rakaahs they have performed.

Verse 3

"**When they stand up for salaah, they stand up lazily** *(reluctantly)*, *(they perform salaah only)* **to show people and they remember Allaah only a little** *(they perform salaah very infrequently)*".[1]

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[1] Surah Hajj, verse 37.
[2] Surah Maa'oon, verse

Verse 4

"**They** *(these Ambiyaa عليهم السلام)* **were followed by such evil successors who destroyed salaah** *(by either rejecting the command or by neglecting its performance)* **and pursued their passions** *(did as they pleased)*. **Soon they shall meet *Ghayy*** *(in the Aakhirah)*..."[2]

The literal meaning of the word '*Ghayy*' is deviation, which refers here to punishment and destruction in the Aakhirah. According to many commentators, *Ghayy* is a pit in Jahannam full of blood and pus into which such people persons will be thrown who had destroyed their salaah.

Verse 5

"**The only thing that prevents their spending** *(acts of charity)* **from being accepted is that they disbelieve in Allaah and His Rasool ρ, that they perform their salaah lazily and spend only reluctantly in charity** *(regarding the charity to be a tax, which is a sign of kufr)*".[3]

While the verses above relate to those who ruin their salaah, the following verses speak of those whom Allaah praises for their good salaah.

Verse 6

"**The Mu'mineen have truly succeeded.** *(The Mu'mineen are)* **Those who are humble** *(sincere, tranquil)* **in their salaah, who turn away from futility** *(talk and acts that have no benefit)*, **who fulfil the act of paying zakaah** *(punctually and happily)* **and who safeguard their private organs** *(from adultery, fornication and other illicit sexual acts)* **except when it comes to their spouses and the slave women whom they own. They will surely not be blamed about** *(cohabiting with)* **them. Whoever seeks more than this** *(by fulfilling their sexual desires in a manner that the Shari'ah forbids)*, **then such persons are transgressors indeed.** *(The Mu'mineen are also)* **Those who give due regard to trusts and their pledges** *(taking every precaution to fulfil the pledges and promises they make to Allaah and to people)* **and are particular about their salaah** *(ensuring that their salaah is performed on time and with all the necessary requisites and etiquette)*. **These are the heirs who shall inherit Firdous** *(the highest level of Jannah)*, **where they shall live forever**".[4]

Rasulullaah ρ said, "Firdous is the highest and best portion of Jannah. It is here where all the rivers of Jannah originate and here that Allaah's throne will be placed there. When you make du'aa for Jannah, always make du'aa for Firdous."

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[1] Surah Nisaa, verse 142.
[2] Surah Maryam, verse 59.
[3] Surah Towbah, verse 54.
[4] Surah Mu'minoon, verses 1-11.

Verse 7

"**Seek assistance with sabr and salaah. Without doubt, this is difficult, except for the humble ones** *(those who fear Allaah)*. *(The humble ones are)* **Those who are convinced** *(of the fact)* **that they will meet their Rabb, and that they will return to** *(meet)* **Him** *(in the Aakhirah for accountability)*".[1]

Verse 8

"**In houses** *(Masaajid)* **which Allaah has commanded that they be exalted** *(honoured and respected)* **and that His name be taken in them, they** *(men whom Allaah guided)* **glorify Him morning and evening**[2]. *(These guided men are)* **Men whom neither trade nor commerce distracts from the Dhikr of Allaah, the establishment of salaah and the paying of zakaah** *(they carry out all these obligations despite the commitments they have towards their businesses and occupations)*. *(Their attitude is like this because)* **They fear a day** *(when they will pass away and the Day of Qiyaamah)* **when** *(because of fear and worries)* **their hearts and eyes will be overturned.** *(Allaah grants them the ability to do all of this)* **So that Allaah may reward them with the best of rewards for their** *(good)* **actions and grant them an increase from His bounty** *(and increase in favours)*. **Allaah sustains** *(provides for)* **whoever He wills without count** *(most generously, and will grant them whatever they wish in Jannah)*".[3]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ said, "Establishing salaah refers to performing Ruku and Sajdah properly, concentrating in salaah and performing it with humility and submission." Hadhrat Qatadah رحمه الله said, "Wherever the phrase 'establish salaah' occurs in the Qur'aan, it refers to guarding its hours, to performing wudhu properly and performing the Ruku and Sajdah properly."

Verse 9

"**Ar Rahmaan's bondsmen are those who walk on earth in humility** *(without pride)* **and, when the ignorant talk to them, they** *(excuse themselves)* **saying, "Salaam"** *(Leave us in peace)*. *(By doing this, they avoid useless talk and senseless arguments.) (They are)* **Those who spend the night in prostrating and standing before their Rabb** *(performing salaah while others are asleep)*".[4]

After describing a few more qualities of His bondsmen, Allaah says further, "**These people, because of their steadfastness** *(in Imaan and Islaam)*, **shall be rewarded with balconies** *(in Jannah)* **where they will be met** *(by the angels)* **with greetings** *(of welcome)* **and Salaam** *(which will increase their honour and reverence)*. **They will live there** *(in Jannah)* **forever. It is surely a beautiful residence and abode**".[5]

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[1] Surah Baqarah, verses 45-46.

[2] Showing respect to Masaajid even includes aspects such as entering them in a state of purity, avoiding worldly discussions in them and not entering them with an unpleasant odour. Taking Allaah's name and glorifying Him in the Masaajid includes performing salaah, engaging in Dhikr, reciting the Qur'aan and teaching Deen to people.)

[3] Surah Noor, verses 36-38.

[4] Surah Furqaan, verses 63-34.

[5] Surah Furqaan, verses 75-76.

Verse 10

"**And** *(in addition to this, they will also be honoured when)* **the angels shall come to them from every door** *(of Jannah/every door of their palaces and the angels will say)* **'Salaam** *(Peace)* **be on you for the sabr that you exercised** *(in this world)*. **How blissful is the outcome of the Aakhirah!'"**[1]

Verse 11

Praising such people in another verse, Allaah says, "*(These people are such that)* **Their sides part from their beds** *(they wake up for Tahajjud salaah)*, **they make du'aa to their Rabb in fear** *(for His punishment)* **and** *(having)* **hope** *(in His mercy)*, **and they spend** *(in charity)* **from what We have provided for them. No soul knows what pleasures are hidden for him** *(in Jannah)* **as a reward for the deeds he carries out**"[2].

Verse 12

"**Verily those with Taqwa shall be** *(enjoying themselves)* **in Jannaat and springs, receiving what** *(bounties)* **their Rabb confers on them. Indeed these people used to carry out good deeds before** *(in the world)*. **Little was it that they slept at night** *(because they devoted their nights to worshipping Allaah)*. **During the closing portions of the night they would be seeking forgiveness** *(from Allaah)*".[3]

Verse 13

"*(Is this Kaafir better)* **Or the person who is engrossed in** *(Allaah's)* **worship throughout the hours of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the Aakhirah and hoping for the mercy of his Rabb? Say, 'Can those with** *(spiritual)* **knowledge be equal to those who do not have knowledge? Only those with** *(spiritual)* **intelligence will heed** *(good advice)*.'".[4]

Verse 14

"**Verily man has been created anxious** *(hasty/impatient/restless)*. **When difficulty afflicts him, he panics** *(loses his composure and becomes impatient)* **and when he experiences good fortune, he becomes miserly** *(too scared to lose what he has)*. *(This is the condition of all people)* **Except those** *(Mu'mineen)* **who perform salaah** *(meticulously);* **those who are constant** *(regular)* **in their salaah...**".[5]

After describing more qualities of these people, Allaah says, "**...and who guard their salaah** *(ensure that the time and method of performing salaah are correct and they never allow any salaah to pass by unperformed)*. **These people shall be honoured in the gardens of Jannah**".[6]

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[1] Surah Ra'd, verses 16-17.
[2] Surah Sajdah, verses 16-17.
[3] Surah Dhaariyaat, verses 15-18.
[4] Surah Zumar, verse 9.
[5] Surah Ma'aarij, verses 19-23.
[6] Surah Ma'aarij, verses 34-35.

Besides the verses above, there are many other verses of the Qur'aan enjoining salaah and praising those who perform their salaah properly. Because salaah is such a great boon, Rasulullaah ρ referred to it as the comfort of his eyes and Hadhrat Ibraheem υ prayed to Allaah saying, "**O my Rabb! Make me one who establishes salaah, and my progeny as well. O my Rabb! Accept my prayer.**"[1]. Here the eminent "Friend of Allaah" is asking Allaah to make him perform his salaah properly and regularly. Allaah Himself instructs Rasulullaah ρ saying, "**Instruct** *(encourage)* **your family to perform salaah and** *(you)* **yourself** *(must)* **remain steadfast on it. We do not ask provision** *(sustenance)* **from you, but We provide for you** *(your duty is to perform your salaah and not to forsake it in search of sustenance because We shall provide that for you)*. **The best** *(most excellent)* **result** *(reward in the Aakhirah)* **is for** *(adopting)* **Taqwa**"[2].

It is mentioned in a Hadith that whenever the members of Rasulullaah ρ's household faced any hardship, he would instruct them to perform salaah and he would recite this verse to them. In fact, it is reported that all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام engaged themselves in salaah whenever they faced any difficulty. However, we seem so unmindful and unwanting of this practice of salaah that we pay no attention to it despite all the claims we make of Islaam and being Muslims. Quite on the contrary, if anybody stands up to draw our attention towards it, we make a joke of him, sneer at and oppose him, thereby harming only ourselves.

Even those who perform salaah do so in such a manner that it will not be farfetched to call it a mockery of salaah because let alone concentration and humility, they do not even perform the fundamentals properly. The practical example of Rasulullaah ρ as well as that of the Sahabah ψ should be the guiding factor in our lives. I have already collected the stories of the salaah of the Sahabah ψ in the book 'Stories of the Sahabah' and will not be repeating them here. However, I shall relate some stories from the lives of a few pious persons. Thereafter, I shall be discussing the sayings of Rasulullaah ρ.

[1] Surah Ibraaheem, verse 40.
[2] Surah TaaHaa, verse 132.

Chapter 3

Stories from the Lives of the Pious

<u>Story 1</u>

Sheikh Abdul Wahid رحمه الله says, "I was once so overpowered by sleep that I went to bed before completing my Dhikr for the night. I saw a most beautiful lady in my dream who was dressed in green silk. Every part of her body, even her shoes, were engaged in Dhikr. She said to me, 'Why do you not make an effort to get me when I am exerting myself to have you?' She then recited a few couplets of love. When I woke up, I vowed not to sleep any more during the night." It is reported that he never slept at night for forty years and always performed his Isha and Fajr salaahs with the same wudhu.

<u>Story 2</u>

Sheikh Mazhar Sa'di رحمه الله who was famous saint continued weeping for sixty years out of his love for Allaah. In a dream one night he saw a stream flowing with pure musk and lined with trees of pearl with branches of gold. Beneath these trees he saw several young women who were engaged in the Dhikr of Allaah. When he asked them who they were, they recited two couplets which meant, "We have been created by the Sustainer of mankind and the Rabb of Muhammad ρ for those people who keep standing before Allaah all night and engage in silent prayers before Him."

<u>Story 3</u>

Hadhrat Abu Bakr Dareer رحمه الله relates, "There lived a young slave youth with me who fasted all day and stood in Tahajjud all night. One day he came to me and said, "When I happened to fall asleep last night I saw in my dream a crack on the wall of the *Mihrab*. When a few lovely damsels emerged from the crack, I noticed that one of them was very ugly. I asked one of the pretty damsels who they were and she replied that while they were all my previous nights (of worship), the ugly one was this night (during which I fell asleep without worshipping Allaah)."

Story 4

A famous Sheikh reports, "One night I fell into such a deep sleep that I could not get up for Tahajjud. I then saw in my dream a girl so beautiful that I had never before seen in my life, who was wearing such a fragrance as I had never smelt before. She handed over to me a piece of paper on which three couplets were written, which meant, 'You so enjoyed your sleep that you forgot the high balconies of Jannah where you have to abide forever without any fear of death. Wake up! It is better to recite the Qur'aan in Tahajjud than to sleep.' Since then these couplets come to my mind whenever I feel sleepy and the sleep is immediately dispelled."

Story 5

Hadhrat Ataa رحمه الله writes, "I once went to the market where I saw a man selling a slave girl who appeared to be insane. I bought her for seven Dinaars and the brought her home. After a portion of the night had passed, I noticed that she got up, performed wudhu and started to perform salaah. She wept so much in her salaah that I thought she would die. After completing her salaah, she began to pray before Allaah saying, 'O my Rabb! Shower Your mercy upon me through the love that You have for me.' I interrupted by telling her that she should rather say, 'Through the love that I have for You'. This angered her and she remarked, 'I swear by Allaah that had He not loved me, I would not be standing here before Him while you are asleep in your bed.' She then fell prostrate and recited a few couplets which meant, 'I am growing more and more restless. How can one rest whose peace of mind is taken away by love, eagerness and constant anxiety? O, Allaah! If there is anything of joy after this, then grant it to me.' Thereafter, she made du'aa in a loud voice saying, 'O Allaah! This matter between Yourself and I has been a secret thusfar. Now people have come to know about it, do raise me up.' No sooner had she said this then she gave a cry and passed away."

Story 6

A similar incident occurred with Hadhrat Sirri رحمه الله, who narrates, "I once bought a slave woman who served me for some time. However, she kept her state of affairs a secret from me. She had a corner in the house reserved for her salaah and would engage in salaah here after completing her duties. One night, I noticed her performing salaah and then making du'aa to Allaah asking for certain tasks to be accomplished by virtue of the love Allaah had for her. It was then that I told her to say 'By virtue of the love I have for You.' To this, she retorted, 'Dear

Master! Had He not loved me, He would not have made me stand in salaah and deprive you of it.’ The next morning I sent for her and said, ‘You are not meant for this job, but are exclusively meant for Allaah's service.’ I then gave her some gifts and set her free.

Story 7

Hadhrat Sirri Saqti رحمه الله writes about another woman, “When she stood up for the Tahajjud salaah, she would say, ‘O Allaah! Shaytaan is merely a creation of Yours over whom You have full control. He sees me while I cannot see him, but You can see him and can control his actions while he has no control over You. O Allaah! Repel the evil that he wishes to do me and avenge the plots he has used against me. I seek Your protection from his evil plans and with Your help do I cast him away.’ Thereafter she would cry profusely, because of which she eventually lost the sight of one eye. When people admonished her to stop weeping in this manner to preserve her other eye, she replied, “If it is destined to be an eye of Jannah, Allaah will grant me better than this. On the contrary, if it is destined to be an eye of Jahannam, then the sooner it is lost the better.”

Story 8

Sheikh Abu Abdullah Jalaa رحمه الله says, “My mother once asked my father to buy some fish and I accompanied him to the market. After buying the fish, we needed a porter to carry it for us so we employed the services of a youth standing there who had offered to do the job for us. He put the load on his head and followed us. We were still on our way when we happened to hear the Adhaan. ‘Allaah’s caller is calling me,’ the youth said, ‘and I still have to perform my wudhu. I shall have to carry the fish only after salaah. If you like you may wait for me, otherwise here it is.’ He then put the fish down and left for the Masjid. ‘When the poor youth could place his trust in Allaah so much,’ my father said, ‘We have more cause to do the same.’ He therefore left the fish where it lay and took me to the Masjid. When we returned after performing salaah, we found the fish lying exactly where we had left it. The youth then carried it to our house. When my father related the story to my mother, she insisted that the youth join us in eating the fish, but he excused himself saying, ‘I am fasting.’ My father then requested him to have Iftaar at our place, but he said, ‘It will not be possible for me to return once I have left, but if I happen to be at the Masjid close to your place, I shall join you for the meal.’ He then proceeded to the Masjid and returned after the Maghrib salaah. When the meal was over, I showed him the room where he could rest. There

lived a woman in our neighbourhood who was crippled. When we saw her walking about in perfect health, we asked her how she had been healed. She explained, 'I prayed to Allaah to heal me because of the blessings that your guest carries. I was healed as soon as I had made this du'aa.' When we later went to look for the youth in the room where he had been staying, the door was shut and he was nowhere to be seen."

Story 9

The incident has been narrated of a pious man who was once suffering from a sore on his foot. Surgeons of his time warned that if his foot was not amputated, the sore may prove fatal. His mother proposed that the operation should be done while he was absorbed in his salaah. This was done and he was completely unaware of it.

Story 10

Hadhrat Abu Aamir رحمه الله says, "I once saw a slave woman on sale for a very small price. She was extremely thin and her hair was unkempt. Taking pity on her, I purchased her and said, 'Come with me to the market, where we need to make some purchases for the month of Ramadhaan.' 'Alhamdulillah!' she exclaimed, 'All the months are alike for me.' She fasted everyday and stood in salaah every night. When Eid drew near, I said to her, 'You may accompany me to the market tomorrow to make purchases for Eid!' 'Dear Master!' she remarked, 'You are too absorbed in this world.' She then went into her room and started to perform salaah. She recited every verse with great love until she reached the verse "**Before him** *(waiting for the Kaafir in the Aakhirah)* **is Jahannam, where he will be given pus to drink**"[1]. She repeated the verse over and over again, gave a cry and passed away."

Story 11

It has been narrated about a Sayyid that he would perform the salaahs of twelve days with the same wudhu and never once lay down to sleep for fifteen consecutive years. He would even pass by several days without even a taste of food. Such incidents are common amongst people who have exerted themselves in gruelling spiritual exercises, which are much too difficult for the likes of ourselves.

[1] Surah Ibraheem, verse 16.

Story 12

Everybody knows Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله, who is regarded as the most eminent Khalifah after the Khulafaa Raashideen. His wife relates, "While there may be other people more particular about wudhu and salaah, I have never seen anybody fearing Allaah more than my husband. After his Isha salaah, he would sit at a place reserved for his salaah, raise his hands in du'aa and keep crying before Allaah until sleep overpowered him. Whenever he awoke during the night, he would again start praying and crying before Allaah."

Since becoming the Khalifah he never shared the bed with his wife. She was the daughter of the King Abdul Malik and amongst the jewellery her father gave her upon her marriage was a priceless diamond. Upon becoming the Khalifah, Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله said to her, "You may either hand over your jewellery to me to be deposited in the public treasury for the sake of Allaah or you may choose to be separated from me. I would not like to live in a house where there is so much wealth." His wife replied, "I can part with a thousand times more wealth, but I cannot part from you." She then deposited everything she had in the public treasury. When Abdul Malik's son Yazeed succeeded Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله as the Khalifah, he said to his sister, "You may have your jewellery back from the treasury if you please." She however replied, "How can the wealth I discarded during my husband's lifetime satisfy me after his death."

When on his deathbed, Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله enquired from the people around him about the cause of his illness. Someone said, "People think it is the effect of black magic." He said, "No, it is not magic." He then sent for a slave of his and said to him, "What made you poison me?" The slave replied, "A hundred Dinaars and the promise of freedom." Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله took the hundred Dinaars from the slave, deposited them into the public treasury and advised the slave to run away to some distant place where he could not be arrested.

Just before his death, Hadhrat Muslimah رحمه الله came to Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله and said, "None has treated his children as you have. You have not left behind any money for your thirteen sons." Hadhrat Umar bin Abdul Azeez رحمه الله sat up in his bed and said, "I have not held back from my sons what they were entitled to, but have only refused them that which was due to others. If my sons are righteous, Allaah will surely be their guardian as He has said in His Book that He is guardian

of the righteous. However, if they are wrongdoers, why then should I care for them?"

Story 13

Hadhrat Muhammad bin Munkadir رحمه الله was a Haafidh of Hadith. When he was asked why he had been weeping so excessively in his Tahajjud salaah one night, he replied, "While reciting the Qur'aan, I came across the verse, "***The evil of what they earned will become apparent to them, and they will be enveloped by*** (the punishment for) ***what they used to mock."*** He was very anxious and worried at the time of his death and said that these words of the Qur'aan were looming before him.

Story 14

Hadhrat Thaabit Bunaani رحمه الله was another Haafidh of Hadith who used to cry excessively in du'aa before Allaah. When someone warned him that he would lose his eyesight if he did not stop weeping in this manner, he replied, "What use are these eyes if they do not weep before Allaah."

He used to ask in his du'aa, "O Allaah! Allow me to perform salaah in my grave if ever You grant this privilege to any of Your slaves!" Hadhrat Abu Sanaan رحمه الله relates, "By Allaah! I was among those present at the burial of Thaabit Bunaani. After he had been placed in his grave, one of the bricks from the side fell off. I peeped into the grave and, to my amazement, I saw Thaabit performing salaah. "Look at that!" I said to a person beside me. He bade me to keep quiet and after the burial we went to his daughter and asked her what it was that her father used to do. When she asked what it was that made us ask the question, we related the incident to her. She said, "He has been regularly performing the Tahajjud salaah for fifty years and prayed every morning before Allaah to allow him to perform salaah in the grave if the privilege was granted to anyone."

Hereunder follow a few incidents concerning the exertion that some pious people applied to their salaah:

1. Hadhrat Imaam Abu Yusuf رحمه الله was preoccupied in imparting the knowledge of Deen and was also the Chief Justice during his time. Despite his involvement in teaching and presiding over court cases, he would perform 200 Rakaahs of Nafl salaah daily.
2. Hadhrat Muhammad bin Nasr رحمه الله was a famous Muhaddith who performed his salaah with such concentration that it is hard to find

any like him. A wasp once stung him on the forehead as he performed salaah, actually causing blood to flow. However, he made no movements at all and no difference could be noticed in his concentration. It is said that he stood motionless like a plank of wood in salaah.

3. Hadhrat Baqee bin Makhlad رحمه الله completed a complete recitation of the Qur'aan in the thirteen Rakaahs of Tahajjud and Witr that he performed every day.
4. Hadhrat Hannaad رحمه الله was also a Muhaddith who wept profusely. One of his student reports that he would teach them in the mornings and then perform wudhu and see to his needs before engaging in salaah until Zawaal. He would then go home and return a short while later to lead the Zuhr salaah. Thereafter, he again engaged himself in performing salaah until Asr and, after leading the Asr salaah, continue reciting the Qur'aan until the Maghrib salaah. Only then would he go home. When the student expressed his surprise at this to a neighbour, the neighbour remarked, "He had been doing this for the past seventy years. In fact, you would be even more astonished if you saw the Ibaadah he engaged in during the night."
5. Hadhrat Masrooq رحمه الله was also a Muhaddith. His wife narrates that he used to perform such long Rakaahs of salaah that his legs would get swollen as she sat behind weeping in pity for him.
6. It is said about Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Musayyab رحمه الله that for fifty years he performed his Fajr salaah and Isha salaah with the same wudhu.
7. It is narrated that Hadhrat Abul Mu'tamir رحمه الله also did the same for forty years. Imaam Ghazzali رحمه الله reports from Hadhrat Abu Talib Makki رحمه الله that the same practice has been reported of no less than forty Taabi'een, some of whom had been doing it for forty consecutive years.
8. It is said that for thirty, forty or fifty years (according to the information of different narrators) Imaam Abu Haneefah رحمه الله performed his Fair salaah with the wudhu he had performed for the Isha salaah. He would go to sleep only for a few minutes in the afternoon saying that the Ahadeeth instruct sleeping in the afternoon.
9. Imaam Shaafi'ee رحمه الله used to complete a recitation of the Qur'aan sixty times in his salaah during Ramadhaan. A person narrates, "I remained with Imaam Shaafi'ee رحمه الله for several days and found him sleeping only for a short while at night."
10. Imaam Ahmad bin Hanbal رحمه الله the famous Imaam of one of the four schools of jurisprudence used to perform three hundred Rakaahs of

Nafl salaah every day in addition to being engaged in his usual work. After he was unjustly lashed by the king, he became very weak and reduced his Nafl salaah to one hundred and fifty Rakaahs. He was eighty years of age at the time.

11. Hadhrat Abu Itaab Salami رحمه الله is reported to have fasted during the day and weeping during the night for forty years.

Besides the above, there are numerous incidents in the books of Islaamic history about those who had been inspired by Allaah. It is difficult to relate all of them in this book and what has been quoted here is sufficient as examples. Through His grace and compassion may Allaah grant me as well as the readers of this book the strength to follow in the footsteps of these illustrious people! Aameen!

Part 3

Quotations from the Ahadeeth

Hadith 1

Hadhrat Ammaar bin Yaasir τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "When a person completes his salaah, he gets either one tenth, one ninth, one eighth, one seventh, one sixth, one fifth, one quarter, one third or one half of the maximum reward (according to the quality of the salaah he performs)."

NOTE: The reward for a salaah is given in proportion to the sincerity and devotion with which the salaah is performed. According to the sincerity and concentration, some people will receive only one tenth of the total reward, while the rewards of others range from less than a tenth and more than half. In fact, there are some who receive the reward in full and there are others who get no reward at all.

It is stated in a Hadith that Allaah has a scale by which the Fardh salaahs are measured and the deficiency is calculated. A Hadith foretells that devotion in salaah will be the first thing to be taken away from the world and a time will come when not a single person in the whole congregation will offer his salaah with proper devotion.

Hadith 2

Hadhrat Anas τ reports that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "When a person offers his salaah at its fixed hours with proper wudhu, with humility and submission and performing the Qiyaam, Ruku and Sajdh properly, this salaah rises up in a bright and beautiful form, praying for the person, 'May Allaah guard you as you have guarded me.' On the other hand, if a person is not punctual with his salaah and does perform wudhu, Qiyaam, Ruku and Sajdah properly, the salaah rises up in an ugly and dark shape and curses the person saying, 'May Allaah destroy you as you have destroyed me!" It is then flung back at the face of the person like a dirty rag."

NOTE: Fortunate are those people whose salaah is so perfect in all respects that this most important act of Ibaadah prays for them. But

what about the salaah of most people who proceed into Sajdah directly from Ruku and who hardly lift their head from the first Sajdah when they go into the second like a crow pecking at something. It is stated in a Hadith that Allaah's curse is upon such a person. When a person is cursed by his own salaah, what can save him from destruction? It is for this reason that the condition of the Muslims is deteriorating every day and the echoes of their destruction are resounding everywhere.

Another Hadith also speaks about the same thing, but with the addition that a salaah offered by a person with sincerity and devotion rises up in a very radiant form, where the gates of Jannah are thrown open for its reception. It then intercedes on behalf of the person who performed it.

Rasulullaah ρ stated, "The likeness of a person not bowing fully in Ruku is that of a pregnant woman aborting just before delivery." Another Hadith states, "There are many fasting persons who get nothing out of their fast except hunger and thirst, and there are many worshippers who stand in salaah at night but get nothing from it except the inconvenience of staying awake."

Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها narrates that she heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Allaah has undertaken to grant salvation to the person who appears before Him on the Day of Qiyaamah who has been offering salaah five times daily at its fixed hours, with due sincerity and devotion and with proper wudhu. There shall, however, be no such undertaking in respect of the person who does not do so. Allaah may either forgive him through His special Grace or take him to task."

Rasulullaah ρ once approached the Sahabah ψ and said, "Do you know what Allaah has said?" "Allaah and His Rasool ρ know best," they replied. Upon repeating the question twice, Rasulullaah ρ received the same reply each time. He then said, "Allaah says, 'I swear by My Greatness and Grandeur that I must admit into Jannah the person who performs salaah five times a day at its fixed hours. As for the person who does not guard his salaah, I may forgive him by My mercy or take him to task."

Hadith 3

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that her heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The first of a person's deeds to be reckoned for on the Day of Qiyaamah shall be his salaah. If his salaah is in order, the person will have succeeded and accomplished his objective. However, if it is spoiled, he

will suffer loss and deprivation. If any deficiency is found in the Fardh salaah, Allaah will say (to the angels), 'Look for any Nafl salaah in his account'. This deficiency in the Fardh salaah will then be compensated for by the Nafl salaah. The rest of the religious duties (fasting, zakaah, etc.) will then be reckoned with in the same manner."

NOTE: This Hadith tells us that we should have adequate Nafl salaah to our credit to make up for any deficiency in our Fardh salaah. There are many people who say that it suffices for them to observe only the Fardh salaah since the Nafl salaahs are meant for the eminent. While it may well be enough to perform the Fardh salaah properly, it is not so easy to perform it perfectly. There will always be some deficiency in one respect or the other and this deficiency cannot be compensated for except through Nafl salaah.

There is another more detailed Hadith that declares, "Salaah is the first obligation commanded by Allaah, the first thing to be presented before Allaah and the first deed to be reckoned for on the Day of Qiyaamah. If Fardh salaah is found lacking in quality, this deficiency will be compensated for through Nafl salaah. The fasts of Ramadhaan will be the next to be reckoned for and any deficiency in these will be compensated for through Nafl fasts. Thereafter zakaah will be reckoned for in a similar manner. If after adding all the Nafl acts, the good deeds are found to be heavier upon the scales, the person shall be admitted into Jannah. If not, he shall be doomed to Jahannam." It was the practice of the Rasulullaah ρ to first teach salaah to any person who embraced Islaam at his hand.

Hadith 4

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Qurt τnarrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "Salaah will be the first thing to be reckoned for on the Day of Judgement. If this is found to be in good order, the rest of the deeds will also be such. If not, then the remaining deeds will also be found lacking."

During his Khilaafah, Hadhrat Umar τ had issued a decree to all his governors saying, "I consider salaah to be the most important duty. A person who guards his salaah is likely to observe all the other injunctions of Islaam. However, if he discards salaah, he will destroy the rest of Islaam."

NOTE: The above statement of Rasulullaah ρ and Hadhrat Umar τ are corroborated by another Hadith which states, "Shaytaan remains scared of a Muslim when he is particular about his five daily salaahs, but as soon as he becomes negligent of them, Shaytaan gets bold and is hopeful of deviating him. He can then be easily enticed to commit more serious wrongs and major sins. This is what is meant by Allaah when He says, "**Verily salaah** *(performed with all its conditions and etiquette)* **prevents** *(the person performing the salaah from)* **immoral** *(indecent)* **behaviour and evil**".[1] ,

Hadith 5

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abu Qataadah τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once said, "The worst thief is one who steals from his salaah." "How can a person steal from his salaah?" the Sahabah ψ asked. Rasulullaah ρ replied, "When he does not perform his Ruku and Sajdah properly."

NOTE: There are many other Ahadeeth conveying the same meaning. Stealing is a disgraceful act and a thief is despised by everybody. How contemptible will a person then be who is declared to be 'the worst thief' by no less a person than Rasulullaah ρ himself?

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ narrates that Rasulullaah ρ once looked up towards the sky and said, "The knowledge of Deen is soon to be taken away from this world." Hadhrat Ziyaad τ enquired, "O Rasulullaah ρ! How can the knowledge of Deen be taken away when we are teaching the Qur'aan to our children and this process will continue in our posterity?" Rasulullaah ρ replied, "Ziyaad! I always regarded you to be an intelligent person. Do you not see that the Jews and the Christians are also teaching their scriptures to their children? Has this been useful to them?"

One of the students of Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ says that after hearing this Hadith from Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ, he went to Hadhrat Ubaadah τ and related the Hadith to him. Hadhrat Ubaadah τ said, "Abu Dardaa τ has spoken the truth. Should I tell you the first thing that will be taken away from this world? It is devotion in salaah. You will the see that not a single person in the entire congregation would be performing his salaah with devotion."

Hadhrat Hudhayfah τ who was the confidant of Rasulullaah ρ was also heard saying, "Devotion in salaah shall be the first thing to disappear."

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[1] Surah, verse 45.

Another Hadith states, "Allaah does not pay any attention to the salaah in which Ruku and Sajdah are not performed properly."
Yet another Hadith says, "A person may be performing salaah for sixty years without a single salaah being accepted by Allaah. This is because he is careless about his Ruku in some salaahs and about his Sajdah in others."

Great emphasis has been placed performing salaah properly in the discourses of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi رحمه الله. Many of his discourses concern this subject and, among other things, he emphasises keeping the fingers of the hands together while in Sajdah and separate while in Ruku, making it clear that these directives are not without purpose. He also writes, "To maintain proper concentration in salaah, it is necessary to fix the glance at the place of Sajdah while standing, at the feet while in Ruku, at the nose while in Sajdah and at our hands while in Qa'dah." When such Mustahab directives increase the value of our salaah, how much more benefit will be gained if we are particular about other regulations which are either Sunnah or more important.

Hadith 6

Hadhrat Ummu Rooman رضي الله عنهما who was the mother of Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها narrates, "I was once performing my salaah when I unwittingly started to lean from one side to the other. When Abu Bakr τ saw me doing this, he reprimanded me so harshly that I almost abandoned my salaah out of fear. He told me later that he had heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "When a person stands for salaah, he should keep his limbs at rest and should not behave like the Jews because keeping the limbs at rest is amongst the factors that perfect the salaah."

NOTE: Keeping the body at rest during salaah is emphasised in many Ahadeeth. During the early days, Rasulullaah ρ often looked towards the heavens in expectation of revelation brought by Hadhrat Jibra'eel υ. As a result, his eyes would sometimes rise up unconsciously even during salaah. He however started to fix his gaze down while in salaah when the following verses were revealed, "**The Mu'mineen have truly succeeded.** *(The Mu'mineen are)* **Those who are humble** *(sincere, tranquil with eyes downcast)* **in their salaah...**".[1]

It is also said about the Sahabah ψ that although they would sometimes cast their glances here and there during their salaah in the early days, they gave up this practice after these verses were revealed.

[1] Surah Mu'minoon, verses 1-2.

Explaining these verses, Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar τ says, "When the Sahabah ψ stood for salaah they never looked to their sides but remained attentive in salaah with their eyes fixed at the place of Sajdah, completely absorbed in Allaah." When someone enquired from Hadhrat Ali τ what humbleness in salaah entailed, he replied that concentration in salaah is implied.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ stated that the humble people mentioned in the above verses are those who fear Allaah and remain motionless in salaah. Hadhrat Abu Bakr τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Seek Allaah's protection from hypocritical devotion." When the Sahabah ψ were asked what he meant by hypocritical devotion, Rasulullaah ρ replied, "To pretend to be concentrating while hypocrisy lurks in the heart."

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa τ relates a similar Hadith in which Rasulullaah ρ is reported to have said, "Hypocritical devotion is that a person outwardly pretends concentration, while his heart is devoid of any."

Hadhrat Qataadah τ says, "To attain devotion in salaah, the heart should be full of fear for Allaah and the gaze should be downcast." When Rasulullaah ρ once saw a person fondling his beard while in salaah, he remarked, "If his heart was blessed with devotion, his entire body would be at rest."

Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها once asked Rasulullaah ρ about looking around while in salaah. He said, "These are what Shaytaan snatches away from the salaah." Rasulullaah ρ once said, "People in the habit of looking up while in salaah must give up the habit, lest their gaze becomes fixed and not return to them."

It has been said by many of the Sahabah ψ and the Taabi'een that devotion refers to tranquillity in salaah. Rasulullaah ρ also said, "Perform each salaah as if it were the last salaah of your life."

Hadith 7

Hadhrat Imraan bin Haseen τ narrates that someone once asked Rasulullaah ρthe meaning of the verse, "**Verily salaah** *(performed with all its conditions and etiquette)* **prevents** *(the person performing the salaah from)* **immoral** *(indecent)*

behaviour and evil".[1] Rasulullaah ρ explained, "Salaah is really no salaah if it does not prevent a person from immoral behaviour and evil."

NOTE: No doubt, salaah is an extremely valuable treasure, which when performed properly will serve to prevent one from immoral behaviour and evil. If this does not happen, there is certainly something lacking in the salaah, as stated in several Ahadeeth. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ says, "Salaah has the power to curb one's inclination to sins."

Commenting on this very verse, Hadhrat Abul Aaliya رحمه الله writes, "Sincerity, fear of Allaah and His remembrance are the three essentials of salaah, without which there is no salaah. While sincerity guides towards good deeds, fear of Allaah forbids one from sin and His remembrance is the Qur'an which in itself enjoined good and forbids from evil. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ reports that Rasulullaah ρ once said, "Salaah that does not prevent from immoral behaviour and evil will take one away from Allaah rather than bringing one close to Him."

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "A person who does not obey his salaah, has actually performed no salaah at all. To obey the salaah is to shun immoral behaviour and evil."

Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah τ reports that a person once came to Rasulullaah ρ and complained of a man who engaged in salaah all whole night but still stole the very next morning. Rasulullaah ρ remarked, "His salaah will soon prevent him from that sin." This Hadith tells us that evil habits can be expelled by adhering to salaah with due sincerity. While it is a difficult and lengthy affair to forsake every bad habit, it is easier and quicker to perform salaah with proper care. Through the blessings of this salaah, all one's bad habits are sure to disappear in due course. May Allaah inspire me to also perform my salaah properly!

Hadith 8

Hadhrat Jaabir τ narrates that he heard Rasulullaah ρ say, "The best salaah is the one with long Rakaahs."

NOTE: While commenting on the verse "**stand humbly before Allaah**"[2] Hadhrat Mujaahid رحمه الله mentioned that this verse refers to performing

[1] Surah Ankaboot, verse 45.
[2] Surah Baqarah, verse 238.

the Ruku properly, devotion, long Rakaahs, keeping the gaze lowered and even lowering the shoulders in submission and fear of Allaah. Whenever any Sahabi τstood for salaah, he would not look about, level the pebbles at the place of Sajdah, engage himself in any absurd act or even think of any worldly thing out of fear for Allaah.

Many interpretations have been given of the word *'Qunoot'* ('humbly'). One opinion states that it refers to remaining perfectly silent. It had been permissible during the early days of Islaam to speak and greet during the salaah, but this was disallowed once this verse was revealed. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood τ says, "During the early days of Islaam, I would greet Rasulullaah ρ with Salaam whenever I visited him and he would also reply with the words of Salaam even when he was busy performing salaah. However, on one occasion when I greeted him as usual while he was performing salaah, he did not reply. I was worried that this might be because Allaah was displeased with me and my mind began to race through several reason why Rasulullaah ρ did not reply. When he had completed his salaah, he said, 'Allaah amends His commandments as He pleases. He has now forbidden any talking during salaah.' Rasulullaah ρ then recited the verse, '**stand humbly before Allaah**[1]'. Thereafter, he said, "Salaah is now meant exclusively for the remembrance, glorification and praise of Allaah."

Hadhrat Mu'aawiya bin Hakam Sulami τ says, "Amongst the many things I was taught when I visited Madinah to accept Islaam was to say *'Yarhamu Kallaah'* when someone else sneezed and said *'Alhamdu Lillaah'*. Because I was new in Islaam, I did not know that this was not to be done during salaah. We were once standing in salaah when somebody sneezed. As I immediately shouted, *'Yarhamu Kallaah'*, everybody began to stare at me. Not knowing that we were not to talk in salaah, I said, 'Why are you all casting these angry looks at me?' They hushed me up with a gesture, but I was unable to understand. Nevertheless, I remained silent. When salaah was over, Rasulullaah ρ called for me and without beat or rebuking, he said, 'It is not permitted to talk in salaah since salaah is the occasion for praising Allaah, glorifying Allaah and reciting the Qur'aan.' By Allaah, I had never met a teacher before that or afterwards who was as affectionate as the Rasulullaah ρ."

Another interpretation given by Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ states that 'humbly' refers to devotion. The opinion of Hadhrat Mujaahid رحمه الله

[1] Surah Baqarah, verse 238.

cited above is based on this interpretation. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ said, "In the early days Rasulullaah ρ used to tie himself up with a rope while performing the Tahajjud salaah so that he could remain awake. It was because of this that Allaah revealed the verse, "**We have not revealed the Qur'aan to you to cause you difficulty**".[1]

It is reported in many Ahadeeth that Rasulullaah ρ's feet swell because of standing for long hours during the Tahajjud salaah. It was because of his kindness and affection for his Ummah that he advised them to do only as much as they could bear. For this reason he forbade a woman from tying herself up to avoid falling sleep during salaah. We should, however, remember that a salaah with long Rakaahs is surely better and more virtuous on condition that it does not exceed the limits of one's endurance. If not, why would Rasulullaah ρ perform such lengthy salaahs that would cause his feet to swell. When the Sahabah ψ exhorted Rasulullaah ρ to reduce his exertion because he had been assured of forgiveness in Surah Fatah, he would say, "Why should I then not be a grateful slave of Allaah?"

It is stated in a Hadith that when Rasulullaah ρ performed salaah, his chest would emit a sound resembling that of a grinding mill. Another Hadith likened this sound to that of a boiling kettle. Hadhrat Ali τ narrates, "On the eve of Badr, I noticed that Rasulullaah ρ stood under a tree, where he engaged himself in salaah and crying before Allaah all night until dawn." Several Ahadeeth state that amongst the people with whom Allaah is very pleased is the one who forsakes the bed he shares with his beautiful wife and engages in the Tahajjud salaah on a winter's night. Allaah is pleased with him, takes pride in him and despite being the All Knowing, Allaah enquires from the angels, "What makes this slave of Mine forsake his bed and stand up like this?" The angels reply, "The hope of earning Your bounty and grace and the fear of Your displeasure." To this Allaah says, "Take heed that I shall bestow upon him that which he hopes for and save him from that which he is afraid of."

It is often mentioned in Qur'aan and Ahadeeth that the angels are perpetually engaged in worship. While a group of them shall remain in Ruku forever, others will remain in Sajdah forever and others in *Qiyaam* forever. Allaah has bestowed us with the honour of combining all these postures of the angels in our salaah so that we may get our

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[1] Surah TaaHaa, verse 2.

share from each type of their worship. Recitation of Qur'aan in salaah is an addition over and above their worship. Since salaah is the combination of all the postures of the angels, its essence can be attained by adopting angelic qualities. It is for this reason that Rasulullaah ρ said, "Keep your backs and stomachs light for salaah." A light back means that he leaves all disputes behind him and a light stomach means that he does not eat so much as to create lethargy and laziness.

The Soofis state that there are twelve thousand virtues in salaah that Allaah has placed in twelve things. By adhering to these twelve things, salaah will be perfected and its full benefit is attained. They are as follows:

1. Knowledge. Rasulullaah ρ stated that a small act done with knowledge is superior to a substantial act done in ignorance.
2. Wudhu
3. Clothing
4. Time
5. Facing the Qibla
6. Intention
7. Takbeer Tahreema
8. Qiyaam (standing)
9. Recitation of the Qur'aan (Qiraa'ah)
10. Ruku
11. Sajdah
12. Qa'dah (sitting to recite the Tashahhud)

Each of these twelve factors are perfected through sincerity. Furthermore, they all comprise of three additional factors each, as follows:

1. Knowledge
(a) To know which injunctions are Fardh and which are Sunnah.
(b) To know what is Fardh and what is Sunnah in 'Wudhu' and salaah.
(c) To know how Shaytaan obstructs the proper observance of salaah.

2. Wudhu
(a) We need to clean our hearts of jealousy and malice just as we clean the physical parts of our body.
(b) We need to purify our limbs from impurities.
(c) We should neither use too much or too little water

3. Clothing
(a) The clothing needs to be bought with Halaal earnings
(b) The clothing needs to be clean and pure
(c) It needs to be according to the Sunnah, not covering the ankles and not worn out of pride and show

4. Time
(a) We must be able to tell correct time at any moment.
(b) We must always be mindful about the Aadaan.
(c) We must be particular about the time of salaah so that we never miss it.

5. Qibla
(a) We must physically face Qibla.
(b) We must focus the heart on Allaah since He is the Qibla of the heart.
(c) We must be as attentive as a slave is before his Master.

6. Intention
(a) We must be certain about which salaah we are performing.
(b) We must remain conscious of our presence before Allaah, Who sees us.
(c) We must have perfect faith that Allaah knows all that is in our hearts.

7. Takbeer Tahreema
(a) We must pronounce the words correctly.
(b) We must raise both hands up to the ears to indicate that we have severed our connection with all apart from Allaah.
(c) We must feel the greatness of Allaah in our heart when we say Allaahu Akbar.

8. Qiyaam
(a) We must fix our gaze to the place of Sajdah.
(b) Our hearts need to be conscious of the fact that we are standing before Allaah.
(c) Our attention must not turn to anything else. It is said that the person who looks about in salaah is like one who manages to secure a hearing from the king after much difficulty with the courtiers and when he finally has the king's attention, he starts to look about. Will the king even pay any attention to him?

9. Qiraa'ah
(a) We must recite the Qur'an properly (with Tajweed).
(b) We must ponder over the meaning of what we recite.
(c) To be practising upon what we recite.

10. Ruku
(a) To keep the back perfectly level. Ulema direct that the head, back and posterior all be in a straight line.
(b) To hold the knees firmly with fingers spread apart.
(c) To recite the Tasbeeh with the grandeur of Allaah in the heart.

11. Sajdah
(a) To place the hands flat on the ground and close to the ears.
(b) To keep the elbows above the ground.
(c) To recite the Tasbeeh with the grandeur of Allaah in the heart.

12. Qa'dah
(a) To sit on the left foot with the right foot erect.
(b) To recite Tashahhud with attention and with the meaning in mind, because it contains salutations for Rasulullaah ρ as well as prayers for one’s fellow Muslim brothers
(c) To make the intention of greeting the angels as well as the people on the right and on the left when making the Salaam.

There are also three components of sincerity. These are:

(a) To perform salaah with the sole purpose of pleasing Allaah.
(b) To acknowledge that it is only by the inspiration and ability from Allaah that we are able to perform salaah.
(c) To hope for the reward promised by Allaah.

Salaah is filled with goodness and blessings and its every word is also filled with the same goodness and the grandeur of Allaah. Just look at the words of the *Thanaa* recited at the beginning of the salaah.

- “Subhaana-kallaah-humma”, which means “We express Your Purity, O Allaah!”. This is an expression of how free from faults and all blemishes Allaah is.

- "Wabi-hamdika", which means "and we express Your praises", denoting that every form of praise due to anything is all due only to Allaah.
- "Wa-tabaarakas-muka", which means "Your name is most blessed" and all who take Your name also gain these blessings.
- "Wa-Ta'aala-Jadduka", which means "Your Greatness is very high" and towers above all others.
- "Wa-Laa-ilaaha-Ghairuk", which means "There is none who deserves to be worshipped but You"

The Tasbeeh recited in Ruku is "Subhaana-Rabbiyal-Azeem" which means "My Rabb, the Most Great, is Pure (from all faults)". It is as if one is saying, "I express my humbleness and weakness before His Greatness by bowing my head before Him because the bowing of head is the symbol of humbleness and submission, just as a stiff neck is the sign of haughtiness and pride. I submit to all Your commands, I am at Your service command. You are truly the Greatest and I submit before Your greatness".

The Tasbeeh recited in Sajdah is "Subhaana-Rabbiyal-A'laa" which means "My Rabb, the Most High, is Pure (from all faults)". It is as if one is saying, "My head, which is considered as the most superb part of the body along with the eyes, ears, nose and tongue, is placed on the ground before Allaah in the hope that He showers down His mercy and blessings upon us.

When we stand with our hands folded before Allaah, it is the first expression of our humbleness and submission. This is then followed up bending our head in Ruku the climax is reached when we place our head on the ground before Him. In fact, the whole salaah is an expression of humbleness and submission and therefore a means of progress and success in this world as well as in the Aakhirah. May Allaah through His Kindness inspire me and all Muslims to perform salaah perfectly.

As mentioned by Hadhrat Mujaahid رحمه الله, it was common with the eminent Sahabah ψ to be filled with fear for Allaah when they stood in salaah. It is said about Hadhrat Hasan τ that his face grew pale whenever he performed wudhu. When someone enquired about this, he replied, "It is the time to stand before the Most Powerful King." Upon

reaching the gate of the Masjid, he would say, "O Allaah! Your slave is at Your door. O the most Generous! Here is a sinner before You. You have instructed the good amongst us to overlook the faults of the bad. O Allaah, Your are Good and I am bad, so for the sake of all that is most beautiful in You, do overlook all that is bad within me, O The most Bountiful." He would then enter the Masjid.

Hadhrat Zaynul Aabideen رحمه الله used to perform one thousand Rakaahs of Nafl salaah daily and would never miss his Tahajjud salaah even when travelling. His face grew pale when he performed his wudhu and he would tremble when he stood for salaah. When someone asked him the reason, he replied, "Do you not know before Whom I am about to stand?" He was once engaged in salaah when a fire broke out in his house. He, however, continued his salaah most calmly and, when asked about it later, he remarked, "The fire of the Aakhirah kept me unmindful of the fire of this world."

He once said, "The pride of a proud person surprises me because just the day before he was a drop of a dirty fluid and tomorrow he will be carrion. How then can he still be proud?" He also used to say, "It is strange that people do so much for this world which is temporary and do nothing for the Aakhirah where they are to live forever." He used to help the poor in the darkness of night so that they would not know who was helping them. Only after his death was it discovered that he had been supporting no less than one hundred families.

It is said about Hadhrat Ali τ his face would also grow pale and he would tremble when the time of salaah approached. When someone asked him about this, he said, "This is the time for discharging the trust which even the skies, the earth and the mountains were too afraid to bear. I do not know if I shall be able to fulfil the trust."

It is reported that whenever Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas τ heard the Adhaan, he wept so much that his shawl would be soaked with tears, his veins would swell and his eyes would become red. Somebody said to him, "We do not see anything in the Adhaan that should make you so uneasy." He replied, "If people understood what the Mu'adhin was announcing to them, they would not sleep and be deprived of all rest." He then proceeded to explain to him the admonitions in every word of the Adhaan.

A person narrates, "I once happened to perform my Asr salaah with Zunnoon Misri رحمه الله. When he uttered Allaah (in the Takbeer Tahreema), he was so much struck by Allaah's Majesty, it seemed as if his soul had left him. When he then uttered the word *'Akbar'*, I felt that my heart would burst out of fear of Allaah.
Hadhrat Uwais Qarni رحمه الله was a famous saint and the most exalted of all the Tabi'een. He would spend entire nights in Ruku and other nights in Sajdah.

When Hadhrat Isaam رحمه الله once asked Hadhrat Haatim Zaahid Balkhi رحمه الله how he performed his salaah, he replied, "When the time of salaah approaches, I perform Wudhu properly and proceed to the place of salaah. When I stand for salaah, I visualise the Kabah in front, the bridge of Siraat under my feet, Jannah on my right, Jahannam on my left and the angel of death hovering over my head. I think that it is my last salaah and that I shall have no opportunity to perform another. Allaah alone knows what goes on in my heart at that time. I then humbly say *Allaahu Akbar* and recite the Qur'aan while pondering over its meaning. I then perform Ruku and Sajdah with complete humility and submission and calmly complete my salaah with the hope that Allaah will accept it through His mercy together with the fear that he may well reject it if it is judged for what it is."

"Since when have you been performing salaah in this manner?" Hadhrat Isaam رحمه الله asked further. Hadhrat Haatim رحمه الله replied, "For the past thirty years." Hadhrat Isaam رحمه الله then wept as he said, "I have never had the fortune of performing a single salaah like this."

It is said that when Hadhrat Haatim رحمه الله once missed his salaah in Jamaa'ah, it grieved him terribly. When only a few people consoled him on this loss, he started weeping and said, "If I had lost one of my sons, half the population of Balkh would have come to console me. However, you are the only people to console me upon the loss of my salaah in Jamaa'ah. This is only because people regard the afflictions of the Aakhirah as more trivial than those of this world."

Hadhrat Sa'eed bin Musayyib رحمه الله said "For the last twenty years, I have never been outside the Masjid at the time of the Adhaan."

Hadhrat Muhammad bin Waasi رحمه الله says, "There are three things in this worldly life that I love most; a friend who brings my mistakes to my

attention, sufficient bread to sustain me and salaah in Jamaa'ah, the defects of which are forgiven and rewards of which are attained."

Hadhrat Abu Ubaydah bin Jarraah τ once addressed the people after leading them in salaah. He said, "Shaytaan made a scathing attack on me while I was leading the salaah by making me think that I am the best of all of you since I was leading the salaah. I shall therefore never lead the salaah again."

When Hadhrat Maymoon bin Mihran رحمه الله once reached the Masjid after the Jamaa'ah was over, he recited "*Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon*" and said, "The reward of this salaah in Jamaa'ah is dearer to me than ruling over Iraq."

It is said that the Sahabah ψ would mourn for three days if they happened to miss the Takbeer Tahreema and for seven days if they missed the Jamaa'ah.

Hadhrat Bakr bin Abdullaah once said, "If you wish to communicate directly with Master, you may do so at any time." When someone asked how this may be accomplished, he replied, "Perform wudhu properly and stand up for salaah."

Hadhrat Aa'isha رضي الله عنها reports that even though Rasulullaah ρ would be engaged in talking with his family members, it would appear as if he did not recognise them when the time for salaah arrived. He would then become completely absorbed in Allaah.

It is said of Hadhrat Sa'eed Tannookhi رحمه الله that tears would continuously flow from his eyes for as long as he remained in salaah.

When somebody asked Hadhrat Khalaf bin Ayoob رحمه الله whether the flies annoyed him in his salaah, he replied, "Even the criminals patiently bear the lashes of the authorities to boast of their endurance afterwards. Why should I then be disturbed by mere flies while standing before Allaah?"

It is reported in the book *Bahjatun Nufoos* that one of the Sahabah ψ was once performing Tahajjud salaah when a thief stole his horse. Although he noticed it, he did not break his salaah. "Why did you not break the salaah and apprehend the thief?" someone asked. He replied, "I was busy with something far more valuable than the horse."

It is said that whenever an arrow got stuck into the body of Hadhrat Ali τ, it was extracted during his salaah. An arrow once lodged so deeply into his thigh that it could not be extracted due to severe pain. When he was once in Sajdah while performing his Nafl salaah, the people managed to extract it using considerable force. When he finished salaah, he asked the people around him, "Have you gathered to take out the arrow?" When they told him that they had already done so, he informed them that he felt no pain at all.

When he stood up for salaah, Hadhrat Muslim bin Yasaar رحمه الله, would say to his family members that they were free to keep talking since he was completely unaware of what they spoke.

It is said that let alone people talking around him, Hadhrat Aamir bin Abdullaah رحمه الله would not even hear the beating of a drum when performing salaah. "Are you aware of anything while in salaah?" someone asked him. "Yes," he replied, "I am aware of the fact that I have to stand before Allaah one day and will then be sent either to Jannah or to Jahannam." The person said, "I am not referring to that. Are you aware of anything we say around you?" He replied, "It is better that spears pass through my body rather than being aware of your conversation while I am in salaah." He used to say, "My conviction in the Aakhirah is so perfect that it is impossible for it to improve even if I have to see it with my eyes."

When a limb of another person needed to be amputated, the people decided to do it while he was engaged in salaah. They then proceeded with the amputation while he performed salaah and he was completely unaware of it.

A pious man was asked, "Do you ever think of this world while you are in salaah?" He replied, "I never think of this world when performing as well as when not." When another saint was asked if he thought of anything while in salaah, he replied, "Is there anything more interesting to think of than the salaah?"

Bahjatun Nufoos relates an incident about a man who once went to visit a particular Sheikh. He found the Sheikh performing the Zuhr salaah, so decided to sit down and wait. After completing the Zuhr salaah, the Sheikh engaged himself in Nafl salaah until the time for Asr arrived. He then started to perform his Asr salaah, after which he immediately

became absorbed in Dhikr until Maghrib. After performing the Maghrib salaah, he again engaged in Nafl salaah until Isha. The poor person was forced to wait all this while. After the Isha salaah, the Sheikh again started to perform Nafl salaah and continued doing so until dawn. After performing the Fajr salaah, he started his Dhikr and other spiritual recitals. As he sat on his Musalla, he was suddenly overpowered by sleep, but he immediately rubbed his eyes, repented to Allaah and said, "I seek Allaah's protection from the eye that does not get enough sleep."

It is reported about another saint that he was unable to fall asleep, would get up and engage himself in salaah saying, "O Allaah! You know well that it is the fear of the Fire of Jahannam that has caused my sleep to disappear."

There are many more stories about the pious people spending their nights praying in eagerness and love for Allaah. However, all these cannot possibly be covered in one book. We have unfortunately lost the taste for the pleasure of such pursuits so much that we actually doubt the truth of such incidents. However, these have been related so frequently and continuously that if we doubt them, we may as well doubt history because the frequency and continuity of a narration stating an event proves its authenticity.

We see people amongst us who spend the entire night standing to watch a film at a cinema or a theatre without getting tired or feeling sleepy. When such sinful acts have such an attraction, what makes us doubt that spiritual pursuits can also be attractive and appealing, especially when here it is Allaah Who provides the strength? The only reason for our doubt is our ignorance, which is like that of an immature child unaware of the joyful experiences of puberty. May Allaah grant us the ability to reach the heights of such spiritual ecstasy.

In Conclusion

According to the Soofis salaah is really a form of intimate conversation with Allaah, which cannot at all be complete without careful concentration. In the case of other injunctions, they may be discharged without such concentration. For example, since zakaah really entails

spending money for the pleasure of Allaah, it is generally so hard on a person that he would feel the pinch even if he does it inattentively. Similarly, fasting requires one to forsake eating, drinking and sexual satisfaction, all of which are still hard, even without proper attention and devotion. On the other hand, Dhikr and recitation of the Qur'an are the chief constituents of salaah. If these are not done with concentration and due attention, they neither qualify to be supplication nor speech. They are then just like the babblings of a person suffering high fever, which does not require any conscious effort nor does it hold any meaning for the listener. It is therefore necessary that we should be completely attentive when in salaah. Without this, our salaah will be like a person who is talking in his sleep. Neither does his speech hold any meaning for the listeners, nor is any benefit attained from it. In the same way, Allaah pays no heed to a salaah that is offered inattentively and without concentration.

However, even if our salaah is not up to the standard of the eminent people in the past, we should not give up the practice, as the ploy of Shaytaan would have us believe. It is wrong to think that there is no use performing salaah that is not perfect. To perform an imperfect salaah is far better than to give it up completely, as this shall result severe punishments in the Aakhirah. In fact, a group of Ulema have issued a decree that a person intentionally discards salaah is a Kaafir, as has been discussed earlier.

It is therefore necessary for of us to exert ourselves in performing our salaah as it ought to be performed and to make it like the salaah of the eminent people in the past. May Allaah grant us the ability to perform a salaah like this so that at least one salaah may be worthy of presentation before Allaah

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that the Muhadditheen are rather liberal in accepting the authenticity of the Ahadeeth relating to the rewards and virtues of various deeds. They would therefore quote Ahadeeth that may have been criticised (because no rulings or regulations are established from these Ahadeeth). As for the stories of the saints and pious people, these are historical report and therefore stand on a level unlike that of the Ahadeeth.

(Hadhrat Moulana) Muhammad Zakariyya رحمه الله
7 Muharram 1358 A.H.